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Advanced
Warfighting
Program

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**Al Sahawa—The Awakening
Volume III-B: Al Anbar Province,
Area of Operations Denver, Hadithah–Hit Corridor**

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Anbar Awakening project, and the five volumes that document its findings, is to tell the story of Al Anbar's *Sahawa*.¹ In doing so, it will show that there were a number of developments throughout Al Anbar between 2003 and 2008 that significantly contribute to the overall Awakening story. This is contrary to the general belief that the Awakening movement started in Ramadi in 2006 and that the movement was not connected to previous events in Al Anbar.² As such, this document, Volume III-B, addresses events in the Hadithah–Hit Corridor of the Coalition's Area of Operations (AO) Denver (see map at Figure D-2, Appendix D).

Hadithah and Hit lie along the Euphrates River in the western portion of Al Anbar Province. These two cities, defining an area referred to as the Hadithah–Hit Corridor, called *the Corridor* hereafter, are approximately 70 miles apart.³ In 2003, as Coalition forces entered western Al Anbar, the populations of the Corridor initially cooperated. Early Coalition efforts to build and train Iraqi security forces—particularly in the Hadithah area—succeeded, but during 2004, the Iraqi-Coalition relationship changed in the area due to events in Fallujah. Marine units assigned to the area deployed to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE, the large-scale but ultimately aborted Coalition effort to pacify the city. The newly-established Iraqi security forces in the Corridor were left with little Coalition support. The void created by the Coalition's absence gave insurgents opportunity to move in and take control.

In addition to sanctuary, insurgents found the Corridor to be strategically important because of its location along the Euphrates, access to a lucrative smuggling route, and its lines of communications to other strategic locations such as the countries of Syria and Jordan, the northern Iraqi provinces of Salah ad-Din and Ninawa, and the cities of Ramadi, Fallujah and Baghdad.

As insurgents seized control of the area, they immediately hunted and, once found, punished Iraqis who had cooperated with the Coalition. The Coalition returned from Fallujah to a demoralized population only to redeploy again to Fallujah in the fall of 2004 to support Oper-

¹ *Sahawa* means Awakening in Arabic.

² Accounts include those of James Soriano, Department of State, Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader in Iraq, 2006–09, (see CWO-4 Timothy McWilliams and LtCol Kurtis S. Wheeler, eds., *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume I: US Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004–2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 120–37, 274), and of Col Gary W. Montgomery, *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II: Iraqi Perspectives From Insurgency to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004–2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009).

³ The Hadithah–Hit Corridor includes an area known as the Hadithah Triad (Hadithah, Barwana and Haqlaniyah), the Al Asad-Baghdadi area, and Hit.

ation AL FAJR, the second and successful assault on the city. Ironically, the Coalition efforts in AL FAJR that pushed insurgents out of Fallujah drove them to seek refuge in the Corridor. They may have been weakened by AL FAJR, but they were not beaten. In the Corridor, they were nastier than before, and they wreaked havoc on those that had helped the Coalition.

Upon the Coalition force's return to the Corridor after AL FAJR, they found that the population no longer trusted them. As an economy of force area for much of 2003–05, the Corridor didn't have enough troops to execute a counterinsurgency strategy of clear, hold, and build. As one Coalition battalion commander described it, they were destined to a cycle of "clear, abandon, clear, abandon..." That changed in October 2005 when additional forces—including elements of the newly formed 7th Iraqi Army Division—deployed to the Corridor. The Marine battalion's AO (that included Hadithah) was also reduced to a manageable size. Although Hit suffered a rapid turnover of forces from September 2005 to February 2006 with five different units assuming responsibility for the area, in February 2006 it would be assigned a US battalion that would stay for an entire year followed by other units with long term commitments to the area.

With these improvements, Marines and Soldiers could conduct clearing operations reinforced with combined (Iraqi and Coalition) presence to hold the area. Although reports showed that the insurgents were still influential, the increase in local civilian leadership and development of the Iraqi Police (IP) improved security to a point where, together, they could show the population that their futures were better served by the Government of Iraq (GOI) than by Al Qaeda or the insurgents.

Throughout the rest of 2006, 2007, and 2008, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Coalition forces continued to gain the population's support.⁴ In Hadithah, stringent population control measures were implemented. Those included building berms around the city to control insurgent's movements and the collecting of biometric data to identify Hadithah residents from "visitors." In Hit, IP stations and checkpoints were exploited to keep insurgents out of the city and to increase security.

Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, credible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.⁵ The project presents the Awakening movement's phases from the development of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition's transfer of responsibility for Al

⁴ It wasn't until the summer of 2004 that the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police were known collectively as the Iraqi Security Forces.

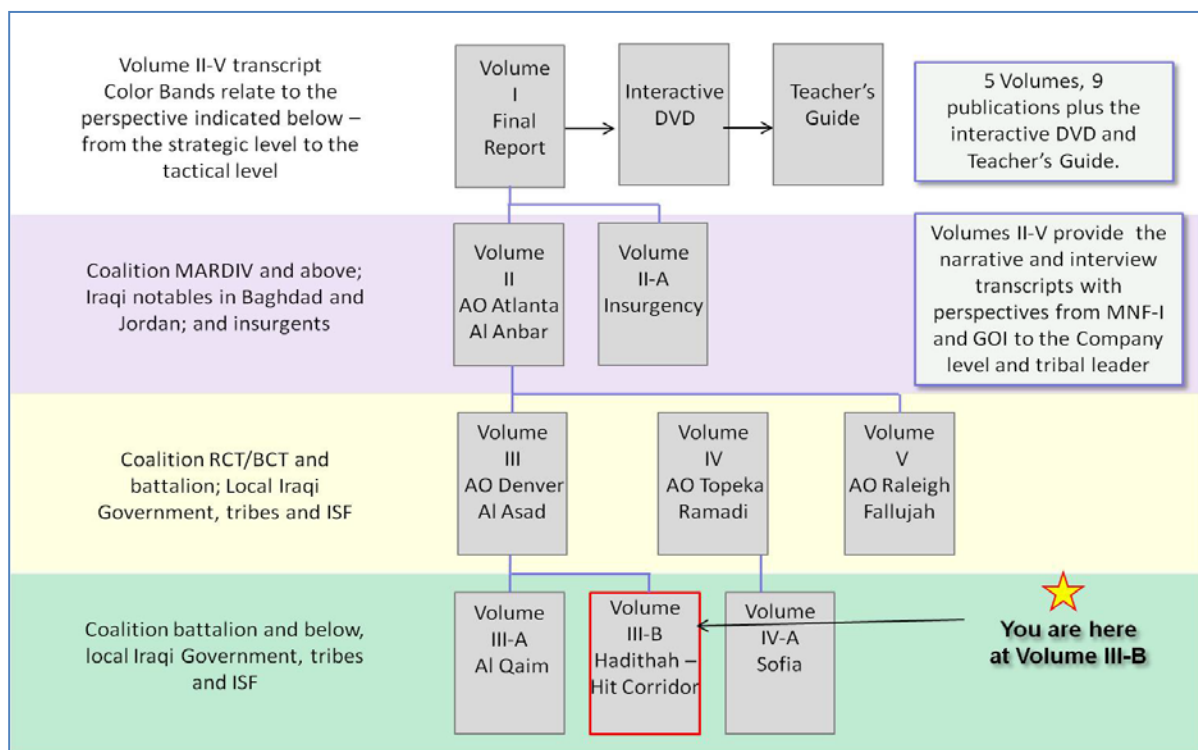
⁵ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

Anbar to the Iraqis in 2008. In addition, it offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts.

Reconstruction

Reconstructing the events in Al Anbar into a multimedia product begins where most case studies, historical analyses, and comparable projects end. The case study has to be completed first; next (or simultaneously, if possible), multimedia materials need to be collected; and then those materials have to be woven together to bring the case study to life. Much of the information came through interviews. Chapter 2 of this document summarizes the transcripts of those interviews contained in the appendices. That summary and those of the other volumes provide the script—the storyboard—with quotes that identify potential “characters” and video or audio clips for the multimedia product.

The Awakening project comprises five volumes of supporting documents and an interactive DVD with a Teacher’s Guide. The purpose of the Teacher’s Guide is to suggest how an instructor might use the DVD and the various volumes to support and inform research, training and education. It provides storyline experiences that may be relevant to on-going conflicts and examples that allow students to see the strategic implications of tactical actions. Volume I is the final report and Volumes II–V, arranged by AO, from strategic to tactical levels, contain background on each AO, transcripts from interviewees who worked in those AOs, and summaries of those transcripts (see Figure).



Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

This Volume

This volume addresses events in the Corridor from 2003 to 2008. It provides both Iraqi and Coalition perspectives, in Appendices A and B respectively, on events in the area that impacted the evolution of the area from an insurgent stronghold to an area that supported the Coalition and GOI.

Themes and Leads

Each volume in this study provides themes corresponding to significant events in each AO. Below are the themes and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in the Corridor; events that were significant and similar or dissimilar to other areas of Al Anbar are also noted.

As mentioned above, as a result of dedicating more forces to the area in the fall of 2005, the situation started to turn. Included in those forces were redeploying Special Operations Forces (SOF) and elements of the newly formed 7th Iraqi Army Division.⁶ With these improvements, Marines and Soldiers were able to conduct clearing operations reinforced with combined (Iraqi and Coalition) presence to hold the area. With the priority to the Hadithah area, however, Hit didn't receive a permanent assignment of forces until February 2006.

The additional forces enabled the recruitment and development of the Iraqi Police in the area. The importance of the local police force cannot be overstated, but the police could not be developed until there was a viable backup in the form of Coalition and Iraqi forces to protect and enable those police forces to operate.

Themes unique to the Corridor or themes highlighted in other AOs but reinforced or challenged by experiences in the Corridor are summarized below.

Combined, Permanent, Persistent Presence

As mentioned above, both Coalition and Iraqi forces were critical to setting the conditions for developing the police force. Population protection was enhanced through control measures such as "berming" the Triad, which consisted of constructing an eight foot berm around the towns of Hadithah, Barwana and Haqlaniyah. Additional measures to control the population and restrict the movement of insurgents included establishing controlled entry/exit points, identification cards, and vehicle registration.⁷

⁶ The purpose of the additional forces was to provide security for the upcoming referendum in October and election in December 2005. Colonel Davis, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, at his office at Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Camp Lejeune, 25 May 2010.

⁷ This was also done in Fallujah during and at the conclusion of Operation AL FAJR.

An Awakening

The evolution of events in Hadithah, Baghdadi, and Hit illustrate that not all awakenings are the same. As Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, the mayor of Hadithah indicated, “there was no popular militia to fight the *sahawa*” in Hadithah as there was in Al Qaim or Ramadi.⁸ In Hadithah the leaders of the IP, the tribes, and the Coalition forces persuaded the people to join the IP and resist the insurgents. Baghdadi’s awakening was also different in that a courageous Iraqi, Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi went home to Baghdadi and decided to organize a police force to fight AQI. Hit was also different in that the Albu-Nimr tribal leadership had already sided with the Coalition primarily for business reasons and, in general, maintained a relationship with the Coalition from 2003 onward. Contributing to the development and maintenance of that relationship were the initiative and strategy of the Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas assigned to the Hit area.

A point stressed in previous volumes was that the Awakening was not only an Iraqi Awakening, but a Coalition Awakening—the Coalition realizing that it needed to work with the Iraqi people and convince them that their interests were better served by the Coalition, and ultimately by the GOI, than they were by AQI. *When* and *how* to transition from combat operations to stability operations is a critical element in counterinsurgency doctrine. One of the battalion commanders indicated that the Hadithah massacre⁹ may have resulted from forces not being as prepared as they should have been to make that transition: “there was no significant operational pause for them to reset and retrain...and do an in-stride rules of engagement change.”¹⁰ He felt that this inability to recalibrate from combat to stability rules of engagement likely contributed to that tragedy.

A Continuous Storyline Connected by Relationships and Events

Tribal engagement and relationships were significant throughout the Corridor, but uniquely so in Hit because of the importance of the Albu-Nimr tribe in general, and the Al Gaoud family in particular. This relationship spanned the local to the national and connected the various awakenings throughout Al Anbar. Influential representatives of the Al Gaoud family were present and involved in every major Awakening event or meeting. Although many Americans perceive events in Ramadi as disconnected from previous events, this study

⁸ Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah Mayor, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, at his office in Hadithah, Iraq, 14 April 2010.

⁹ The massacre refers to a 19 November 2005 incident when 24 Iraqi civilians were killed in the aftermath of a roadside bomb attack on a 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines vehicle patrol. For a detailed description of the incident, see Tim McGirk, *Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Haditha?* Time.com, 19 March 2006, <www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1174649,00.html>.

¹⁰ Colonel Norman Cooling, former commander of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3) in the Hadithah area of Iraq, March–September 2006, interview with Major General Thomas Jones, USMC, Ret., Mountain Warfare Training Center, 7 May 2010.

shows that the Iraqis saw and leveraged those connections and relationships, thus creating a continuous storyline that

- began in 2004 with the battles for Fallujah and the meetings in Amman, Jordan,
- sparked in Al Qaim with the first significant revolt of a tribe against AQI,
- saw the emergence of courageous Iraqi leaders such as Colonels Shaban and Farouq in late 2005/2006 to organize and lead local police forces in the Corridor;
- was strengthened by the continued involvement of influential Iraqi tribes and families to connect the various events;
- set the conditions in 2006/2007 for the Ramadi *sahawa*, the turning point, where it accelerated throughout Al Anbar, and
- entered its final stages in Al Anbar 2007/2008 with its return to the environs of Fallujah.

Rather than the starting point, Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* was the product of accumulating events.

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1. The Awakening¹¹

At a 14 September 2006, meeting in Ramadi, three days after a classified report was leaked to the *Washington Post* announcing Al Anbar as “militarily unwinnable,” Sheikh Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha announced the Awakening—the *Sahawa*.¹² At that meeting, Sattar, along with 40 other sheikhs from the Ramadi area, signed an Emergency Council proclamation to work with the Coalition to drive Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) from Al Anbar. By December 2006, 18 of the 21 Ramadi-area tribes had joined this Awakening movement.¹³ By February 2007, the movement began to accelerate throughout Al Anbar as the Coalition reinforced areas seeking help to defeat Al Qaeda. On 3 September 2007, one year after Sattar’s announcement, President George W. Bush met with the tribal leaders of Al Anbar and the leadership of Iraq to congratulate them on their successes.¹⁴ Sattar was assassinated ten days later, but the Awakening did not stop or stall. On 1 September 2008, conditions were stable enough for the Coalition to hand over control of the province to the Iraqis.

What happened? How could Al Anbar—the cradle of the Sunni insurgency and the birthplace of AQI—turn around so quickly?

A. Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, credible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.¹⁵ The project presents the Awakening movement’s phases from development of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition’s transfer of responsibility for Al Anbar to the Iraqis in 2008. In addition, it offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts. The ultimate product is a multimedia instructional package to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.

¹¹ The Awakening movement was the Al Anbar Awakening until 2007 when two things occurred: Sheikh Sattar changed the name Al Anbar Al Sahawa to the Al Sahawa Al Iraqi, and the movement was implemented in other areas of Iraq outside of Al Anbar.

¹² Thomas E. Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 2006.

¹³ Ramadi is a city and district—in this case, those sheiks came from both the city and the district. Anthony Deane, Colonel, USA, “Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle,” *Military Review* (Jan–Feb 2010).

¹⁴ Alissa J. Rubin, “Sunni Sheikh Who Backed US in Iraq Killed,” *New York Times*, 14 September 2007, <www.nytimes.com/2007/09/14/world/middleeast/14iraq.html>.

¹⁵ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

B. Collection

Interviews were conducted in the United States, Iraq, and Jordan, and were structured around a series of five primary research questions (PRQ). Those questions were supplemented with secondary research questions (SRQ) that provided more granularity to the research. The SRQs, when answered, addressed the breadth and depth of the project and kept it focused on the objective. None of the research questions were necessarily static; they changed as they were answered and new leads developed. Interview plans based on those questions were tailored to each interviewee. Although the final collection plan was more detailed and complex, the initial PRQs and SRQs are in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Initial Primary and Secondary Research Questions for the Awakening Project

Primary Research Questions	Secondary Research Questions
1. How, when, and why did the insurgency start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who participated and why did they join?• How were they supported within Iraq and/or by other countries?
2. What was the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a single definition? If so, what is it and if not, what are the other definitions? Do different groups define it differently?• What are the various perspectives—Coalition, Iraqi, Insurgent, others?• Was there more than one Awakening?
3. What caused the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What events set the conditions for the Awakening?• Who and what caused those events—Coalition, Al Qaeda in Iraq, insurgents, Iraqis (residents, tribes), the Government of Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces, and others?• Was there a “tipping point?” If so, when, where, how did it start, and how did it evolve?
4. How did the Al Anbar Awakening reconcile the causes identified by PRQ 3? Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation?	No SRQs
5. What were the major themes of and lessons from the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did these themes and lessons contribute to success in the larger context of Iraq?• Are they transferable to other areas such as Afghanistan or Africa?• Should they be incorporated into doctrine?• Should they be taught at the various Professional Military Education institutions? If so, how?

C. Publication Series and Structure

Creating an unclassified, credible, accurate resource for trainers and educators to examine the Awakening using multimedia is more difficult than it may sound. Constructing all of the material gathered during the interviews into a multimedia product begins where most case studies, historical analyses, and comparable projects, end: First, you have to complete the case study; next (or simultaneously, if possible), you have to collect the multimedia materials; and then you can finally weave those materials together to bring that case study to life.

That being the case, this volume is part of a multi-volume set comprising interview transcripts and a final study report, and provides a basis for the multimedia product.

D. The Volumes

The Al Anbar Awakening product consists of five volumes of reference material, comprising nine publications, plus a Teacher's Guide with an interactive, multimedia DVD. Volume I is the final report containing a storyline that follows the organization of the DVD. Volumes II–V contains the interview transcripts organized according to Coalition areas of operation (AOs). (See Figure 1-1; also, a map of the various AOs is in Appendix D.)

The volumes are organized as follows:

- Volume I. Al Anbar Awakening—Final Report
- Volume II. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Atlanta, An Overview
- Volume III. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Denver, Western Euphrates
- Volume IV. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Topeka, Ramadi Area
- Volume V. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Raleigh, Fallujah Area

Taken together, these volumes tell the in-depth Awakening story and feature all of the interview transcripts from which the storyline was constructed. As an example, Volume II covers AO Atlanta, which is approximately all of Al Anbar province. Volumes III–V cover the AOs subordinate to AO Atlanta and districts subordinate to Al Anbar.

Additionally, Volumes II–V all begin with the same introduction, PRQs, and structure to orient readers within the project and storyline, regardless of which volume they read first.

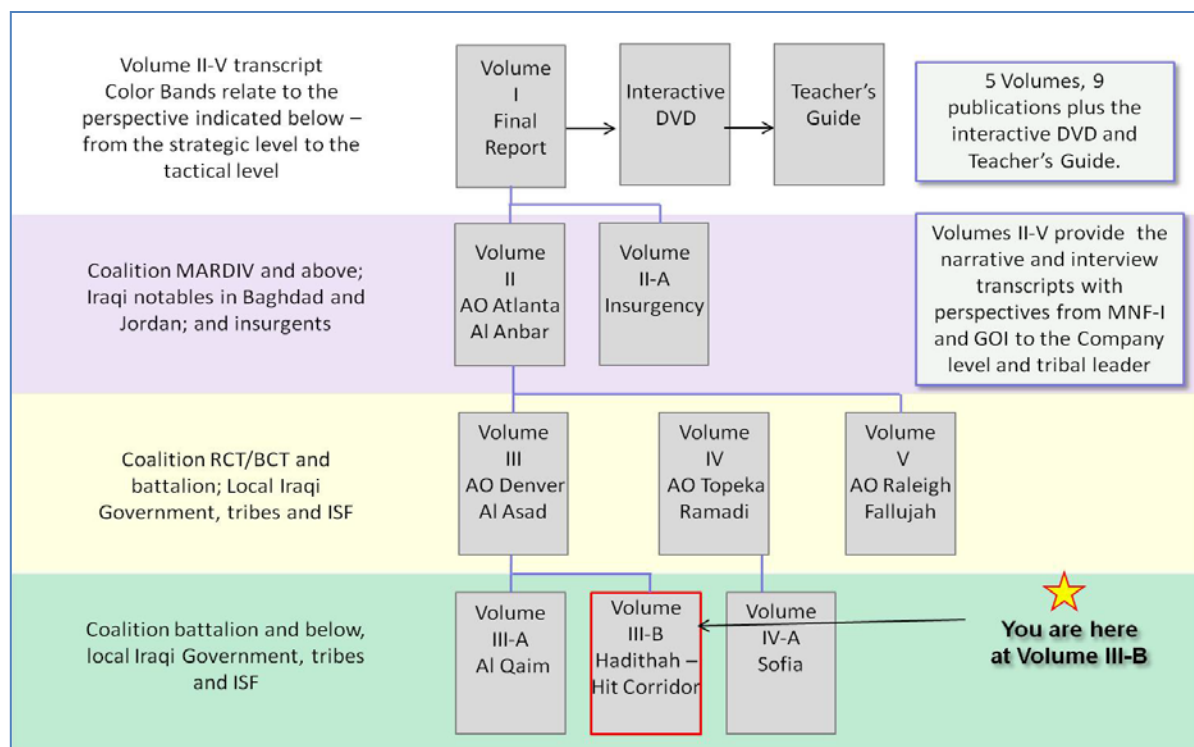


Figure 1-1. Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

This Volume

The volume you are reading (Volume III-B) presents Coalition and Iraqi perspectives on events in the Hadithah–Hit Corridor. Table 1-2 provides the list of Coalition and Iraqi interviewees for this publication. Their interview transcripts are provided in Appendices A and B.

Chapter 2 of this paper provides the storyline of events, responds to the research questions posed in the collection plan, and provides themes and lessons relevant to the Anbar Awakening.

Appendices include:

- A—Transcripts: Coalition Perspectives
- B—Transcripts: Iraqi Perspectives
- C—Who’s Who. Name spellings and descriptions of Iraqis who appear in the document. The description includes the person’s position, tribal affiliation, and some background information.
- D—Maps. Map showing areas discussed during the interviews.
- E—Illustrations
- F—References
- G—Abbreviations

Table 1-2. Transcripts appearing in Volume III-B¹⁶

#	Interviewee	Position in Iraq	Interview Date
Appendix A: Coalition Transcripts			
1	Col Bryan McCoy	Cdr, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment (3/4 Marines), Feb–Jul 2004	16 Mar 2010
2	Col Norman Cooling	Cdr, 3/3 Marines, Mar–Sep 2006	7 May 2010
3	Col James “Stretch” Donnellan	Cdr, 2/3 Marines, Sep 2006–Apr 2007	16 Mar 2010
4	CW3 Tony Goble	Special Forces Operational Detachment (ODA) 545 Aug ‘05–Apr ‘06 and Aug ‘06–Apr ‘07	21 Apr 2010
5	MSG Martin Moore	SFODA 545, member, then team Sergeant, Aug 2006–April 2007 (Hit)	21 Apr 2010
6	COL Douglas Crissman,	Cdr, Task Force 2-7 Infantry (TF 2-7 IN) in Hit from Jan 2007 to Sep 2007	7 Oct 2011
Appendix B: Iraqi Transcripts			
8	Sheikh Sa’id, Al-Jughayfi	Principal Sheikh, Al-Jughayfi tribe, Hadithah	14 Apr 2010
9	Mayor Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid	Mayor, Hadithah, Feb 2007 to present	14 Apr 2010
10	Col Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi,	Chief of Police, Baghdadi Oct 2005–2009	8 Apr 2010
11	Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi,	Chief of Police, Hadithah District, Apr 2006–2009	8 Apr 2010
12	Mr. Numan Abdul Mahsen al-Gaoud	Businessman and member of the Albu-Nimr Tribe in Hit	13 Feb 2011
13	Sheikh Bezi Majil Nijris al-Gaoud	Albu-Nimr Tribe, Hit	3 Feb 2011

Note: The convention used throughout the study in the text is to refer to the ranks of officers, particularly American officers, during the time of deployment being discussed, corresponding to their positions indicated in the center column of Table 1-2. The references and footnotes will refer to their ranks at the time of their interview indicated in the left column of Table 1-2.

¹⁶ Coalition ranks are at the time of the interview; Coalition command positions and timeframes are in Iraq.

2. The Hadithah–Hit Corridor

Hadithah and Hit lie along the Euphrates River in the western portion of the Anbar Province. These two cities, defining an area referred to as the Hadithah–Hit Corridor, here forth called *the Corridor*, are approximately 70 miles apart.¹⁷ In 2003, as Coalition forces entered western Al Anbar, the populations of the Corridor initially cooperated. Early Coalition efforts to build and train Iraqi security forces—particularly in the Hadithah area—succeeded, but during 2004, the Iraqi-Coalition relationship changed in the area due to events in Fallujah. Marine units assigned to the area deployed to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE, the large-scale but ultimately aborted Coalition effort to pacify the city. The newly-established Iraqi security forces in the Corridor were left with little Coalition support. The void created by the Coalition’s absence gave insurgents opportunity to move in and take control.

In addition to sanctuary, insurgents found the Corridor strategically important because of its location along the Euphrates, access to a lucrative smuggling route and its lines of communications to other strategic locations such as Syria and Jordan, the northern Iraqi provinces of Salah ad-Din and Ninawa, and the cities of Ramadi, Fallujah, and Baghdad.

As insurgents seized control of the area, they immediately hunted and, once found, punished Iraqis who had cooperated with the Coalition. The Coalition returned from Fallujah to a demoralized population only to redeploy again to Fallujah in the fall of 2004 to support Operation AL FAJR, the second and successful assault on the city. Ironically, the Coalition efforts in AL FAJR that pushed insurgents out of Fallujah drove them to seek refuge in the Corridor. They may have been weakened by AL FAJR, but they were not beaten. The insurgents drive into the Corridor was more ruthless and widespread the second time around. These AQI-led insurgents carried out a murder and intimidation campaign that would set back Coalition efforts to gain the support of the population for several years. It was not until the Coalition had sufficient forces to execute its strategy of clear, hold, build, and until a number of local Iraqi’s came forward to lead the security forces and local governments, that the situation started to improve.

Finally, in 2006 and 2007, the cities of Hadithah and Hit respectively, turned against AQI. Although the cities were under the operational purview of the Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team (RCT) located at Al Asad, they were treated very differently with priority of forces within the Corridor devoted to Hadithah first and Hit second for reasons

¹⁷ The Hadithah–Hit Corridor includes an area known as the Hadithah Triad (Hadithah, Barwana and Haqlaniyah), the Al Asad-Baghdadi area, and Hit.

discussed below. As such, each city and its surrounding environment will be addressed separately. The following is an account of their stories.

A. Hadithah Triad

Hadithah is a farming city on the Euphrates River 140 miles northwest of Baghdad. It, along with Haqlaniya and Barwana—a combined population of 100,000—comprise the area called the Hadithah Triad (see Figure 2-1). The Hadithah Triad is strategically important for several reasons: lines of communications, water, hydro-electricity, and oil.

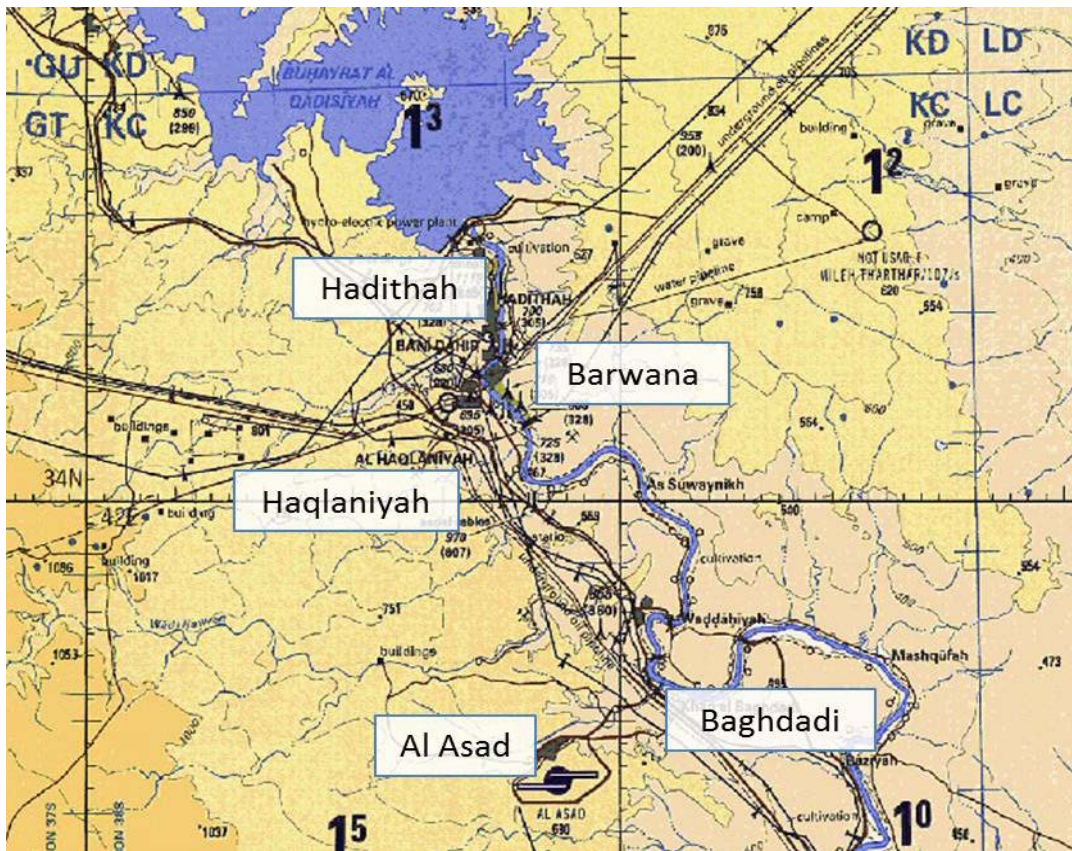


Figure 2-1. Map of Hadithah in Western Al Anbar

First, within Al Anbar Province and within the northwest region of Iraq, the Hadithah Triad is centrally located. Colonel Farouq al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah District Chief of Police, explained, “It was between Salah ad-Din [to the north and northeast], Ninawa [northwest], and the Syrian border,” which is why Iraqis commonly referred to the Hadithah Triad as a “knot.” Insurgents quickly learned to exploit this knot area, and used its many routes to infiltrate or exfiltrate areas along the Euphrates River to the west to Syria or Jordan, to the north to Mosul or southeast to the cities of Ramadi, Fallujah,

and Baghdad.¹⁸ Another important aspect of the city is the Hadithah Dam, located on the southern point of Lake Qadisiyah. This hydroelectric dam provided 13 percent of Iraq's electricity and was vital for irrigation in the area.¹⁹ The dam became fully operational for the first time since 1990 in June 2004 after the US Army Corps of Engineers repaired it. Haqlaniya is also the home to a major oil refinery known as K3.²⁰ The refinery has the potential of producing 16,000 barrels of oil per day, provides more than 1,000 local jobs, and produces oil for factories, electricity, and cooking.²¹

1. US Forces Enter Hadithah

For the first few months of the invasion, the Coalition's Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) operated in western Al Anbar with the major thrust of conventional forces approaching from the south. In May 2003, the first conventional force—the 1st Squadron of the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3rd ACR)—was assigned responsibility for Hadithah. Forces were immediately deployed to the Hadithah Dam, because it was considered a critical target. An Azerbaijani infantry company attached to the ACR provided security at the dam complex, adding to the “coalition” element of the campaign.²²

As was the case in many Al Anbar cities, the population of Hadithah initially accepted the Coalition.²³ Mayor Abd al-Hakim Rashid described the townspeople's reaction:

...After President Bush declared the end of the operations on 1 May 2003, all Iraqis, including Hadithah citizens, welcomed the Coalition forces.

The Iraqi situation was very complex, and they started fighting the Coalition forces. They [insurgents] started beheading people. If they [had] doubts about

¹⁸ Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah Chief of Police, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Provincial Government Center in Ramadi, 8 April 2010.

¹⁹ Michael Martinez, “New Offensive Launched against Iraqi Insurgents,” *The Seattle Times* (26 May 2005) <http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2002289097_iraq26.html>; and “Haditha,” *Globalsecurity.org* <www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/haditha.htm>.

²⁰ CWO-4 Timothy McWilliams and LtCol Kurtis Wheeler, *Al Anbar Awakening, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009, Volume I American Perspectives*, interview with USMC Brigadier General Martin Post, USMC, 2009.

²¹ Lance Cpl Paul Torres, “Oil Refinery Fuels Al Anbar Forward,” US Marine Corps website, 18 July 2008, <www.1stmardiv.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/8585/Article/88406/oil-refinery-fuels-al-anbar-forward.aspx>.

²² Lieutenant Colonel Paul Calvert, USA, former S-3 for 3rd ACR, interview with John McCool with one Operational Leadership Experiences Project at the Combat Studies Institute, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 17 February 2006.

²³ Colonel Norman Cooling, former commander of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3) in the Hadithah area of Iraq from March to September 2006, interview with Major General Thomas Jones, USMC, Retired, Mountain Warfare Training Center, 7 May 2010.

anyone who helped the American forces, they cut off his head. The situation became very bad, and the people were afraid.²⁴

2. Establishing a Trend: Clear and Abandon

In March 2004, the USMC First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) took over responsibility for all of Al Anbar. Subsequently, the MEF assigned 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines (3/4), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bryan McCoy, to Hadithah. McCoy's battalion area also included the town of Rawah, which is north of Hadithah, and the area south, halfway to Hit.²⁵ LtCol McCoy embraced First Marine Division Command (1st MARDIV) Major General James Mattis' guidance to establish a Combined Action Platoon (CAP) program capability, and charged the platoon with training and supporting the local Iraqi police force.²⁶ Such an approach leveraged a counterinsurgency tenet: put an Iraqi face on security to demonstrate control, inspire confidence, and win the support of the general population.²⁷ Marines quickly established a permanent presence in the town, conducting combined US-Iraqi patrols and helping to resolve local disputes.²⁸ While the insurgent threat grew, it had not yet matured into an organized fighting force.²⁹

Unfortunately, soon after the CAP was formed and as collaborative efforts were gaining momentum, 3/4 was pulled from Hadithah and dispatched to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE. The unit left only a small craft company as the sole presence in Hadithah.³⁰ Some of the Iraqi Police (IP) belonging to the CAP program had developed such a strong relationship with the Marines that they wanted to join 3/4 in Fallujah and fight alongside their new American partners. "They wanted to come with us. We had lived together, fought together," said Lieutenant Matt Danner, a platoon commander in 3/4 Marines. "I told them they had to guard Hadithah, and that we'd be back for them."³¹

²⁴ Abd al-Hakim Rashid, former mayor of Hadithah, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, his office, Hadithah, 14 April 2010.

²⁵ Colonel Bryan McCoy, former commander 3/4, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Major General Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, CENTCOM, Tampa, FL, 16 March 2010.

²⁶ The acronym CAP stood for Combined Action Program during Vietnam. Although essentially the same concept, in Iraq it stood for Combine Action Platoon, per Colonel Dale Alford briefing on 3/6 Marines in Al Qaim, August 2005 to March 2006, Institute for Defense Analyses, 16 February 2010.

²⁷ Captain Matthew Danner, USMC, "The Combined Action Platoon Seeds of Success in Iraq," American Veterans <http://www.americans-working-together.com/american_veterans/id16.html> 26 February 2010; Bing West, "The Road to Haditha," *The Atlantic* (October 2006).

²⁸ John Koopman, "Marines Seal Bonds of Trust/Special Unit Wants to Win Hearts and Minds," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 July 2004.

²⁹ West, "The Road to Hadithah."

³⁰ Joseph Giodono, "Beached Marines Ready to Return to the Water," *Stars and Stripes* Mid-east edition, (10 January 2005). The small craft company is equipped with the Small Unit Riverine Craft used by Marine small craft units. The 39-foot boat, armed with a Gatling gun and several other heavy weapons, carries a crew of five, along with up to 15 ground troops. It is used to patrol the waterways along the Euphrates. McCoy interview, 16 March 2010.

³¹ West, "The Road to Hadithah."

As soon as 3/4 departed, insurgents from surrounding areas moved in.³² Without the Marines' support and guidance, the IPs could not maintain control. Insurgents severely punished Iraqis who had interacted with, or even worse, who had supported the Coalition. Several dozen police officers were killed while anyone who stood in the insurgents' way was ruthlessly attacked.³³ This was the first round of the insurgency's murder and intimidation campaign designed to coerce the population to their side, or at a minimum, to ensure nobody supported the Coalition.

The Marines returned from Fallujah six weeks later. LtCol McCoy called their absence an "operational pause." Coalition forces quickly resumed their work with the IPs, but they soon observed differences in how the population viewed them. One Corporal squad leader described it as "sinister." "On some blocks, people would wave. But mostly they ignored us, like we weren't even there. You could sense something was going on..."³⁴

Chaos and violence continued throughout 2004 as the insurgents gained strength and exploited the Marines' inability to generate sufficient combat power to secure the area. Even though the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines (1/8) continued the CAP initiative when it replaced 3/4 in Hadithah in July of 2004, any progress was once again lost in late October when 1/8 was deployed to Fallujah to participate in Operation AL FAJR. Again, the population perceived this move as the Coalition forces abandoning them to the insurgency. 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines (1/23), whose AO was primarily in and around Hit, did shift subordinate units north to Hadithah to try to cover down for 1/8's departure, but now 1/23's battlespace ranged from Hadithah to Hit—a distance of about 70 miles. Given the threat, it was an impossible task for a single battalion.

The insurgents wasted no time exploiting the security vacuum created by 1/8's departure; they wreaked havoc in the main city centers, destroyed four IP stations, and murdered and tortured most of the police force as well as anyone who had cooperated with Coalition forces.³⁵ By late 2004, AQI had complete control over the city.

Lieutenant Colonel Norman Cooling, Commander 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3) explains the dynamic that occurred in Hadithah during AL FAJR:

Many of the insurgents were filtering out of those larger urban areas [in Fallujah] that were the focus of combat power and flowing into Hadithah. Concurrently, the same flow was happening from outside of Iraq...Al Qaeda was flowing forces from Syria and other places into Iraq, and of course, the meet-

³² McCoy interview, 16 March 2010.

³³ Andrew Tilghman, "U.S. Call for Iraqi Police in Haditha Goes Unanswered," *Stars and Stripes* (5 June 2006).

³⁴ West, "The Road to Hadithah."

³⁵ West, "The Road to Hadithah."

ing place for both was Hadithah. It's the first place where you really can blend into a large urban area.³⁶

1/8 never returned to Hadithah. The Marines of 1/23 were left to cover the untenable AO that included Hit for four months until the next unit came in. Because the Marines were spread so thin, insurgents remained entrenched in the town and surrounding communities.

In early 2005, responsibility for AO Denver, which included the Corridor, changed when RCT-7 handed over responsibility to RCT-2. Colonel Stephen Davis, RCT-2's commanding officer, created a campaign plan designed to keep insurgents off balance.³⁷ As the campaign plan was executed, units in RCT-2 were required to leave their assigned AOs to support operations in other areas of AO Denver. As a result of this "very aggressive rotational clearing strategy," units already severely challenged by a lack of sufficient combat forces found it impossible to hold any land that was temporarily cleared.³⁸

In March of 2005, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (3/25), under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Lionel Urquhart, conducted a relief in place with 1/23. In addition to inheriting a city overrun by the insurgency, 3/25 inherited the same oversized battlespace (from Hadithah to Hit) that 1/23 had been assigned.³⁹

An example of RCT-2's clearing strategy was Operation QUICK STRIKE. Conducted in August of 2005, QUICK STRIKE employed 3/25, 3/2 from Al Qaim, and 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion from Rutbah. Due to the lack of resources, the Marines couldn't hold the area they cleared; instead, insurgents fled to avoid the sweep, only to return once the Marines had departed.⁴⁰

During this time, various insurgent and terrorist groups, including AQI and the more nationalist Islamist group Ansar Al-Sunna, still controlled Hadithah. Sharia prevailed. DVDs documenting the executions of alleged spies were distributed to children on the street.⁴¹ Any surviving Sunni police officers had fled, and no one would volunteer for police duty for fear of being killed. The town council implored the Marines not to play pro-government messages on the radio, because they did not want to be seen as helping the Americans. By this point, the Marines in Hadithah and the surrounding areas had been completely marginalized.⁴²

³⁶ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

³⁷ Colonel Stephen Davis interview, Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC at his office, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Camp Lejeune, 25 May 2010..

³⁸ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

³⁹ Omer Mahdi and Rory Carroll, "Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel," *The Guardian* (22 August 2005).

⁴⁰ Mahdi and Carroll, "Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel."

⁴¹ Mahdi and Carroll, "Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel."

⁴² West, "The Road to Hadithah."

3. Available Forces Increase: Clear and Hold

In September 2005, as Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Chessani's 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines (3/1) assumed responsibility for the Hadithah Triad, a positive development appeared on the horizon. As a result of reinforcements sent into AO Denver, 3/1's battlespace was scaled down to just the Hadithah Triad; approximately one-third of the area that 3/25 had been charged to cover. Soon after, RCT-2 conducted Operation RIVER GATE, which was designed to create a permanent Coalition presence in the Triad. Units aggressively surged into the area conducting clearing operations. 3/1 cleared the Triad house by house. Mine clearing line charges were detonated along major avenues of approach in the city, because of the extensive IED threat. Although these actions signaled a rebirth of strength and control by Coalition forces, they also further alienated much of the population. Among the population's complaints was the bridges that were destroyed along the Euphrates River between Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, and Barwana, making daily life a struggle for local Iraqis on both sides of the river.⁴³

Mayor Hakim recalled:

They also demolished some of the schools and some of the government buildings by using the excuse that there were insurgents inside...being a liberator, you should have won the support of the peaceful civilians. This bad behavior created enemies.⁴⁴

By the end of the operation, 3/1 began constructing three firm bases from which it would begin routine patrols of the town.⁴⁵ Following Operation RIVER GATE, 3/1 immediately shifted from highly kinetic clearing operations to stability operations. Many Marines in 3/1 were veterans of the high-intensity combat operations of Fallujah that occurred exactly a year prior. The shift in focus demanded a shift in the rules of engagement (ROE). LtCol Cooling described 3/1's situation:

Now all of a sudden, they're in a stability phase and there was no significant operational pause for them to reset and retrain...and do an in-stride rules of engagement change.⁴⁶

The Marines' inability to recalibrate relative to the ROE likely contributed to the tragic incident on 19 November, when a squad of Marines killed a group of 24 civilians after losing a teammate to an IED attack.⁴⁷ Already distrustful of Coalition forces because of the

⁴³ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

⁴⁴ Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah Mayor, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, 14 April 2010.

⁴⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth W. Estes, USMC (Retired), *U.S. Marine Corps Operations in Iraq, 2003-2006*, Occasional Paper, History Division, US Marine Corps, Quantico, VA, 2009, p. 101.

⁴⁶ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

⁴⁷ Tim McGirk, "Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Haditha?" *Time*, 19 March 2006.

repeated re-deployments that left them vulnerable and because of the aggressive conduct of RIVER GATE, this event quashed any near-term chance of gaining the population's support.

4. The Lion of Baghdadi

As 2005 drew to a close and 3/1 faced considerable challenges in the Hadithah Triad, something happened in the town of Baghdadi that would prove pivotal to the entire region. Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi, an Iraqi with solid bona fides and substantial clout with the locals, came forward to battle the insurgents despite personal risk. He had fled his home city of Baghdadi in April 2005 and returned in October to discover insurgents controlling the city, intimidating and killing anyone who cooperated with Coalition forces.⁴⁸

Enraged by the terror being waged on fellow Iraqis, Shaban pronounced to a group of AQI over a mosque's loud speaker:

I swear to God I am going to fight you guys forever! I will fight you wherever you go. I am saying this, and I am not afraid, because you are not working for the Iraqi people. You aren't helping them. You destroy and you kill. God willing, I am going to fight you and the generation right after me is going to fight you too.⁴⁹

It took the Coalition several months before it trusted this passionately anti-AQI colonel. Eventually, the Coalition, Shaban, and several tribal sheikhs united and persuaded citizens to join the IP, of which Shaban had just become the chief. By the end of 2005, Baghdadi was largely under the control of Coalition and ISF.⁵⁰ Shaban's example would have ramifications throughout Al Anbar Province. In fact, Shaban had such a positive effect on the area, that it prompted Brigadier General David Reist, the Deputy Commander of Multi-National Forces–West in the Spring of 2006 to credit Shaban's work in Baghdadi as the starting point of the awakening in the Corridor—several months before similar awakening events occurred in Ramadi.⁵¹ Not surprisingly, because of his success, COL Shaban was targeted by AQI for assassination. On 4 October, while pursuing insurgents, his vehicle was ambushed. He was severely wounded and taken to a US medical

⁴⁸ Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi, former Baghdadi Chief of Police, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, 8 April 2010.

⁴⁹ Shaban interview, 8 April 2010.

⁵⁰ Shaban interview, 8 April 2010.

⁵¹ Brigadier General David Reist, Deputy Commander MNF-W, February 2006–February 2007, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Ms. Mary Hawkins, and Colonel Tracy King USMC, 4 October 2010. This is significant because it places the start of the Awakening in the Hadithah–Hit Corridor before the September 2004 Awakening in Ramadi.

facility.⁵² Figure 2-2 is a still from the video of Shaban challenging the terrorists from his hospital bed saying that he will not be intimidated and that he will continue to fight.⁵³

As 3/1's deployment came to a close in March of 2006, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3), under the command of LtCol Norm Cooling, gained responsibility for the region. Shortly after 3/3's arrival, RCT-7 replaced RCT-2 and expanded 3/3's AO. LtCol Norman Cooling estimated that his battalion's area of responsibility had increased approximately 40 percent. To accommodate this change, 3/3 Marines paired with the Iraqi Army's 2nd Battalion, 27th Brigade (2/27 IA). The Marines helped develop 2/27 IA into a highly capable unit that would go on to conduct battalion-sized operations on its own (Figure 2-3).⁵⁴



Figure 2-2. Col Shaban Challenges Terrorists from his Hospital Bed

The Marines of 3/3 were determined to solidify the *hold* phase of clear, hold, build that 3/1 had begun when it created the forward operating bases during RIVER GATE. LtCol Cooling worked to identify and cooperate with key leaders in the area. The Marines also held IP recruiting drives outside of Baghdadi, but were stymied, because of the fear and intimidation campaign waged by the insurgents, who successfully reminded the locals of the price paid by fellow Iraqis who followed such a path.⁵⁵

⁵² American Forces Press Service, "Police Chief Survives Attack," 6 October 2006.

⁵³ Shaban interview, 8 April 2010. COL Shaban provided the video and translation.

⁵⁴ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010. Unit 2/27 IA entered the area in January 2006 but was not operational until 3/3 Marines' rotation.

⁵⁵ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010. Pamela Hess, "Analysis: Iraqi Heroes Pay High Price," *United Press International*, 15 March 2007.



Image courtesy US Marine Corps

Figure 2-3. Iraqi Soldiers from 2/27 Patrol with Elements of 3/3 Marines in Haqlaniyah⁵⁶

5. Another Iraqi Returns Home to Fight AQI

In August of 2006, Marines were sent to the city of Shirqat in the Salah ad-Din Province where Colonel Farouq Tayeh Hardan, a charismatic former leader of the Provincial Security Forces, and other members of Hadithah's police force had fled.⁵⁷ Marines went to speak with Farouq after LtCol Cooling learned that Farouq and a group of policemen fled to Shirqat in June of 2004 after harsh threats from AQI.⁵⁸ Additionally, AQI had beheaded Farouq's brothers. The Marines, however, convinced Farouq and others to return to Hadithah to help Coalition forces to regain the population's support and to root out the insurgents.⁵⁹

Col Farouq spoke about his homecoming:

I expected that when I arrived in Hadithah there would be a celebration....But because the people of Hadithah have never in the history of mankind been sub-

⁵⁶ Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System website. <www.dvidshub.net/image/26617/marines-haditha-triad-continue-work-with-iraqi-soldiers-quell-insurge#.TnEEexyqit4>.

⁵⁷ Farouq interview, 8 April 2010.

⁵⁸ Hess, "Analysis: Iraqi Heroes Pay High Price."

⁵⁹ Farouq greatly supported Coalition efforts; however, Marines were compelled to keep a "tight rein on him," because of the retribution that Farouq paid to AQI supporters. From Cooling interview. Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

jected to so much pain and suffering—their houses destroyed, children killed—my reception was the opposite of what I expected. They wouldn't shake my hand or say hello to me. Anybody who saw me would just turn their face and walk or run away.⁶⁰

The citizens had been subjected to an exceptional amount of pain; it was clear that tireless effort would be required to regain their support. Farouq became the Chief of Police, and in one attempt to reach out to the people, offered a bail option to families of prisoners who were considered low risk. According to Farouq, “people came in by [the] tens and hundreds.” Local tribal leaders, such as Sheikh Sa'id of the Jugayfi tribe soon joined Farouq to fight AQI and boosted overall efforts.⁶¹ Additionally, Shaban of Baghdadi offered critical support by supplying 90 Baghdadi police officers—enough for a bridging force until a local police force could be established.⁶² Residents soon saw the police force as an effective and viable institution, which in turn made it easier to encourage citizens to join the ranks. As security improved, local officials and tribal leaders began to meet regularly with the Marines to discuss security and reconstruction in the town.⁶³

Mayor Hakim said that it was during this time—when the leaders of the IP, the tribes, and the Coalition forces persuaded “the people [to] join the IP and resist the bad guys”—that Hadithah's *sahawa* occurred. He explained:

...nobody led the *sahawa* in Hadithah. There was no popular militia to fight the Sahawa. It was official. They joined the IP. This way, we established the security in Hadithah.

6. Recognizable Progress

In September of 2006 when 3/3's deployment ended, the insurgency was still a potent threat in the Hadithah Triad area. The surge of IP recruits triggered AQI to send more fighters to the city in an attempt to thwart progress.⁶⁴ However, 3/3's success with 2/27 IA, combined with headway in developing a viable police force, provided the incoming 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (2/3) the opportunity to increase the operational tempo.

Consequently, the security situation that 2/3, commanded by LtCol James Donnellan, inherited set the conditions for a turning point. Soon after gaining its footing, 2/3, reinforced by Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4), conducted Operation AL

⁶⁰ Farouq interview, 8 April 2010.

⁶¹ Farouq interview, 8 April 2010.

⁶² Shaban interview, 8 April 2010.

⁶³ Sergeant Roe F. Seigle, USMC, “Progress Steady, Marines Meet with Iraqi Leaders, Discuss Security in Haditha Triad Region,” US Marines website, 5 May 2006, <www.marines.mil/unit/1stmardiv/Pages/2006/Progress%20steady,%20Marines%20meet%20with%20Iraqi%20leaders,%20discuss%20security%20in%20Haditha%20Triad%20region.aspx>.

⁶⁴ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

MAJID. The operation was designed to disrupt and defeat insurgent activity by controlling entrances and regulating traffic in all towns of the Triad, and was accomplished by constructing eight-foot-high dirt berms (see Figure 2-4), which facilitated collecting biometric data with the Biometric Automated Toolset System, registering vehicles into a database, and issuing ID cards to the local population.⁶⁵ These control measures severely restricted the insurgent's freedom of movement, throwing them off balance and denying them the initiative.



Figure 2- 4. Bermed area near K-3 Oil Refinery

LtCol Donnellan explained:

Then over the course of that time, the population control part of it really took effect. IED strikes were the immediate indicator as they started to dry up, because in the course of berming, we also did a systematic search.⁶⁶

To reinforce the control measures, the battalion worked aggressively with Farouq and the sheiks to strengthen the police force. By the time the battalion's deployment in April 2007

concluded, they had recruited and mentored a force from a fledgling 10–12 officers to more than 200 policemen. Also, as the security situation stabilized with the growth of a viable police force, governance grew with the appointment of the new mayor, Abd Al-Hakim Muhammad Rasid in the fall of 2006. Mayor Hakim worked with the Coalition to normalize the city. Circulating through the Triad, Mayor Hakim conducted numerous tribal engagements, sought input from shop owners, and began essential repairs to the Triad's infrastructure.⁶⁷ Further evidence of the growth in governance came in the form of weekly meetings Donnellan, Mayor Hakim, and Farouq held with local officials and tribal leaders.⁶⁸

When 2/3 concluded its deployment in April of 2007, it passed its responsibility to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines (1/3), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chip Bierman. LtCol Bierman's Marines inherited an operational environment clearly moving in the right di-

⁶⁵ Staff Sergeant T. G. Kessler, USMC, "California-based Marines, 'Magnificent Bastards,' Continue to Turn Up Weapons Caches in Iraq's Haditha Region," US Marines website, 26 December 2006; Corporal Mark Fayloga, USMC, "2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Returns to Isle," US Marines website, 26 February 2010; Hess, "The Battle for Haditha."

⁶⁶ Colonel James Donnellan, former 2/3 Battalion Commander, interview with William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Major General Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, 16 March 2010.

⁶⁷ Donnellan interview, 16 March 2010.

⁶⁸ Corporal Luke Blom, USMC, "Marines, City Leadership Discuss Haditha's Future," Marines Website, 4 February 2007.

rection, and they continued to build trust among the Iraqis, while encouraging more residents to join the police force. With the security situation stabilizing in the Triad, 1/3 transitioned to the *build* phase. Joint Iraqi-American operations continued to root out any remaining insurgents, but the emphasis was on setting the conditions to rebuild the communities. Businesses and markets reopened, and for the first time in years, citizens began to move throughout the region without fear of intimidation. By the end of 2008, major renovations had taken place: schools were refurbished, the hospital had doctors and medical supplies, roads and water were being restored throughout the Triad.⁶⁹ Although it had taken almost four years and a heavy price paid by many, the future of the Hadithah Triad would not be determined by the insurgents.

B. Hit

The Iraqi city of Hit (pronounced *heet*), an agricultural city along the Western Euphrates River Valley, was one of the last areas in Al Anbar to shed AQI's influence.

Hit and its surrounding area, home to approximately 130,000 residents, was unique for two reasons: First, it was on the outer edge of regimental command AO Denver, bordering AO Topeka, and was a northern entry point to and escape route from Ramadi. Second, it was the home of the one of the most influential tribes in Al Anbar, the Albu-Nimr Tribe.

During the first years of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Hit suffered from the insufficient and short-term assignment of Coalition forces. The rapid turnover of units precluded Iraqi-Coalition relationships from developing and inhibited the development of local security. In part, this explains why Hit was one of the last cities in Al Anbar to become secure. It seems that despite its location as a gateway to Ramadi, Hit was considered geographically and politically less important in the Coalition's priority for assigned forces, though that did not mean it was unimportant. As Master Sergeant Andy Marchal, Team Chief for Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 555 described it, it was the home and center of gravity of the Albu-Nimr tribe. The Albu-Nimr tribe was one of the largest and most influential tribes in Al Anbar and arguably within Iraq.⁷⁰ Leaders of the Albu-Nimr tribe, and in particular the Al Gaoud family originating in Hit, were key participants and leaders in a number of major Awakening events that took place in Iraq as well as in Jordan.

1. Hit at the Beginning of the War

As in Hadithah, the US force to first operate in western Al Anbar in 2003 was the Joint Special Operations Task Force–West. In April 2003, responsibility for Al Anbar

⁶⁹ Hakim interview, 14 April 2010.

⁷⁰ Master Sergeant Andy Marchal, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 21 December 2012.

Province was transferred to the 3rd ACR. The 3rd ACR's presence in Hit was minimal, because its forces were spread across all of Al Anbar Province. Moreover, they were focused outward, on protecting the border region and targeting the flow of foreign fighters into the towns

When units from the 3rd ACR entered Hit, they found it in poor economic shape. The Regiment's operations officer (S-3), Lieutenant Colonel Paul Calvert, USA, described Hit's state:

The drainage system was terrible. The hospitals were run down as well as the government buildings. The local governments were really in disarray. They had a *de facto* mayor within the towns but we really weren't sure where their loyalties were.⁷¹

The "de facto mayor" that LTC Calvert refers to was Naim al-Gaoud. Naim, a member of Albu-Nimr, was elected soon after Coalition forces entered Iraq. At the time, the 3rd ACR worked with him because the Albu-Nimrs appeared to support Coalition efforts; however, the Coalition thought that they couldn't truly trust the mayor or the tribe.

Mayor Naim al-Gaoud's brother, Numan al-Gaoud, was aware of this and explained the situation.

When the American Army entered, we chose Naim to become the mayor of Hit...There were several attempts on Naim's life...the Ba'ath Party and Al Qaeda worked against him, at the time, in 2003, after the invasion. There was no police at all...Our tribe protected his life. Naim and the commander of Hit...cooperated well together. They worked together...When [the commander] saw the amount of people coming to protect Naim against Al Qaeda and the Ba'ath Party he said, "Who are these people, the huge amount of people?" Naim said, "This is my tribe. They all came to protect me." The American commander was cooperating with them, working together. He did not attack any of these people when they came in the thousands to protect Naim. The Americans did not protect my brother at that time, because they didn't know who was the enemy and who was the friend to them, so the tribe protected him.⁷²

In early February 2004, Special Forces ODA 555 from 5th Special Forces Group entered the Hit area; approximately one month later, the Marines assumed control of the Province. RCT-7, commanded by Colonel Craig Tucker, was responsible for AO Denver, and the responsibility for Hit fell upon the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines (2/7).⁷³ While 2/7 focused on establishing the CAP, engaging the city council, and fighting the enemy, the ODA focused on engaging the tribes in the area to undercut the insurgents' center of grav-

⁷¹ Calvert interview, 17 February 2006.

⁷² Mr. Numan Abdul Mahsen al-Gaoud, Iraqi Businessman, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Jordan, 13 February 2013.

⁷³ LtCol Kenneth W. Estes, USMC (Ret.), *U.S. Marines in Iraq, 2004-2004: Into the Fray* (Washington: USMC History Division, 2011), 166.

ity, their connection to the people. The team's mission was "to identify and exploit opportunities to split al Qaeda elements from nationalist strands of the insurgency."⁷⁴ MSG Andy Marchal, the ODA 555 team leader, knew from past experiences that the tribes were critical and that he and his men would be competing with the insurgents for tribal support. The team's plan was simple: figure out which was the most powerful tribe in the AO and work with it.⁷⁵ Prior to entering the area, Marchal's team identified the Albu-Nimr tribe as the dominant tribe in Hit.

Working through an informant called "Nubs" from the Shamal clan of the Albu-Nimr tribe, and coordinating with the CJSOTF and Major General Mattis, commander of 1st MARDIV, Marchal created a "provisional company of Shamal/Albu-Nimr tribesmen."⁷⁶

Less than one month after 2/7 moved into Hit, it was redeployed to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE. As occurred in Hadithah and other areas, during 2/7's absence, insurgents filled the vacuum, punishing those townspeople who had interacted with the Coalition forces.

Many of the cities along the Western Euphrates were excellent hideouts for insurgents because of the existing travel infrastructure along the river. However, Hit's location was ideal for insurgents who wanted to be close to the big fights in Ramadi and Fallujah.

During this time the tribesmen supported the Coalition efforts in VIGILANT RESOLVE by keeping the main road between the Al Asad Airbase and Fallujah clear of IEDs. To show its commitment and to reinforce their relationship, ODA 555 began performing small-scale civil affairs projects in Hit's Al Phurat district, which largely comprised members of the Albu-Nimr tribe (Figure 2-5).⁷⁷ This opened the door for Albu-Nimr's paramount sheikh, Sheikh Reshad al-Gaoud, and MSG Marchal to meet routinely.

2. Initial Success...

Despite the insurgents and their intimidation campaign, 2/7 returned to Hit and established one of the first CAP programs since Vietnam (as did 3/4 Marines in Hadithah). The CAP's mission was to train Iraqi forces so that they could eventually function on their own. CAP organized and coordinated missions and operations between the Marines, the 503rd Iraqi National Guard (ING) Battalion, and the IP. By the end of 2/7's deployment, Marine and ING forces had "confiscated hundreds of illegal weapons and explo-

⁷⁴ Brent Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of 'Who'," Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009.

⁷⁵ Master Sergeant Andy Marchal, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 21 December 2012.

⁷⁶ Marchal, 21 December 2012.

⁷⁷ The Albu-Nimr tribe attempted to work with Coalition Forces during the early days of the war. Sheikh Bezia offered the tribesmen's support if the United States would arm the tribe. Mr. Keith Mines, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 13 March 2011. He went on to say that this wasn't so much an awakening as it was a simple business deal.

sive material, captured several insurgents, and successfully engaged the enemy on numerous occasions with no casualties to ISF or TF [Task Force] 2/7 Marines.”⁷⁸

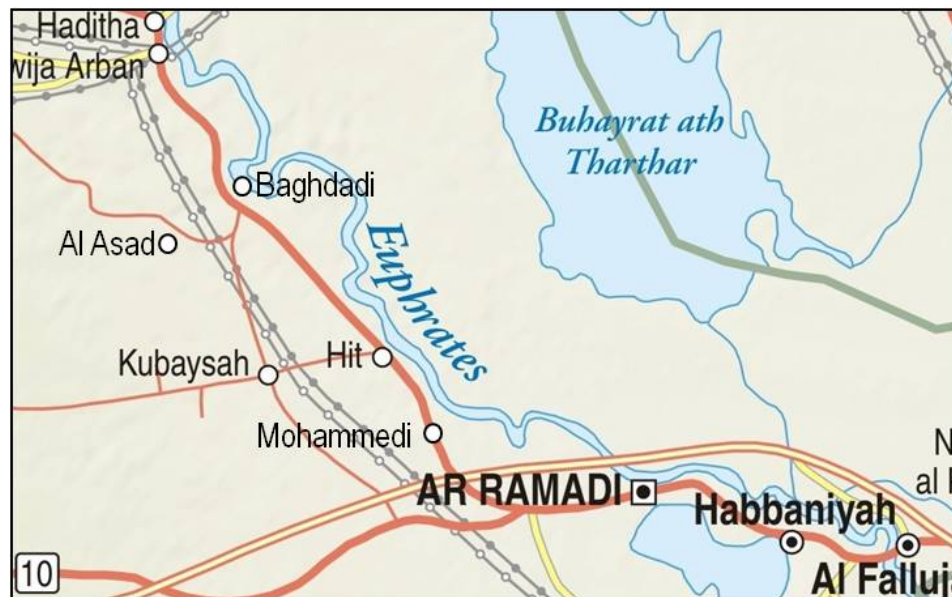


Figure 2-5. Map of Hit and Surrounding Area

3. ...and Setbacks

The connection that ODA 555 had painstakingly built with the Nimr tribe was set back when, in June 2004, the Coalition Provisional Authority transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government. The transfer changed a number of policies and relationships. One of the policy changes eliminated the use of Commanders Emergency Response Program funds to pay local security forces. With funding terminated in June and the redeployment of ODA 555 to the states in July, the Coalition ceased supporting the Nimr company. Subsequently, the tribesmen were absorbed into the 503rd Iraqi National Guard Battalion, which the Albu-Nimr tribe saw as corrupt.⁷⁹ In the fall of 2004, because of a greater need in Baghdad, Special Operations Forces (SOF) was withdrawn from Al Anbar thus breaking the long-standing SOF/Albu-Nimr connection in the Hit area.⁸⁰

Additionally, any gains as a result of work by 2/7 and the CAP during the spring and summer of 2004 were lost when the next unit responsible for Hit, 1/23 Marines, assumed responsibility for the entire Corridor in the fall of 2004. As 1/8 in Hadithah left to support

⁷⁸ Jason Goodale and Jon Webre, “The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq: An Old Technique for a New War,” *Small Wars Journal*.

⁷⁹ Marchal, 21 December 2012

⁸⁰ Thomas R. Searle, “Tribal Engagement in Anbar Province: The Critical Role of Special Operations Forces” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 50 (Third quarter, 2008): 62–66.

Operation AL FAJR in Fallujah in November 2004, 1/23 repositioned forces to the northwest to cover those areas vacated by 1/8. As 1/23 greatly reduced its presence in Hit, local sheikhs promised that the local security forces would maintain security. Little did anyone know that the second- and third-order effects of AL FAJR would damage security in the Corridor to a point that it would not recover until mid-to-late 2006.⁸¹

4. Conventional Operations

In March 2005, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (3/25), a Reserve Marine Corps unit, assumed responsibility for Hit.⁸² The Marines of 3/25 had a large AO—the region from Hadithah down to Hit—the entire Corridor.⁸³ At about the same time, RCT-2, commanded by Colonel Stephen Davis, replaced RCT-7 marking the beginning of high operational tempo in AO Denver. Col Davis designed an aggressive campaign involving a major regimental operation about every two to three weeks. The Corridor in general and Hit in particular were often part of RCT-2's operation. Many accused RCT-2 of simply conducting “whack-a-mole” across AO Denver, but Davis' plan was to disrupt the enemy, keep them off balance, and eventually to create a combined, permanent, persistent presence when forces became available.⁸⁴

Some operations were decidedly non-kinetic. For example, Operation OUTER BANK occurred 1 April–3 May 2005 in the Corridor and was designed to survey the area and gain situational awareness.⁸⁵

Still other operations, like Operation SWORD in late June 2005, were designed to gain trust as well as ground. Operation SWORD was the first time RCT-2 conducted an operation with a company of trained Iraqi forces. The company was split: one group was assigned to 3/25 Marines and the other to 3/2 Marines in Al Qaim. As a result of this operation for Hit, two forward operating bases and one Combat Outpost were established and were the first steps towards a combined, permanent, persistent presence in the city.⁸⁶

Col Davis explains the effects of Operation SWORD:

We established two FOBs [forward operating bases], which were always combined with Iraqis and Americans. One was up at the traffic circle in the north end of Hit and one was down in the Youth Center in the south central part. They [the enemy] didn't like that at all, because you're now in the disruption

⁸¹ Murphy, “In Fallujah's Wake, Marines Go West.”

⁸² Estes, *US Marines in Iraq*.

⁸³ Marchal, 21 December 2012

⁸⁴ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

⁸⁵ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

⁸⁶ Davis interview, 25 May 2010; “Operation Iron Hammer,” Global Security.org, <www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oif-iron-hammer_2005.htm>.

business. Our guys were there permanently, and they started working out of these FOBs despite multiple attacks trying to remove them.⁸⁷



Figure 2-6. Hit Neighborhoods North of the River

isolating the Albu-Nimr tribe, one of the only relatively pro-Coalition elements in Hit. The residents on the north side of the river in area called al Phurat were now at increased risk (Figure 2-6).⁸⁸

5. Re-enter SOF

In August of 2005, Special Forces teams were reintroduced into Al Anbar after being absent for more than a year. MSG Marchal, now with ODA 545 deployed to Hit to find the security situation worse than when he left in July 2004. The police were nonexistent, the 503rd ING had collapsed, and SVBIEDs were on the rise.

Marchal initially reestablished the relationships he had previously built. He contacted “Nubs” and through him linked up with fellow tribesmen such as Sheikh Hatim al-Gaoud, Hikmat al-Gaoud, and Sheikh Al Jubayr al-Gaoud. CW3 Tony Goble, Assistant Detachment Commander for 545 described his experience:

We were seeing if their [individuals mentioned above] allegiance or alliance was pro-government. We spent a lot of time on that side [north] of the river camping out at night in the desert as our security posture. Then during the day, we’d go in, link back up with him, and continue some conversations to the point where we felt that they were on board with at least wanting to see the area change and wanting to bring security to the area.⁸⁹

Because Marines had mistakenly killed Sheikh Reshad in January 2005, the ODA was unsure of how the Albu-Nimr Tribe would react to their return, so they created situa-

⁸⁷ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

⁸⁸ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

⁸⁹ CWO3 Tony Goble, USA, former member of Special Forces ODA, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Iraq, SOTF headquarters at Camp Victory, 1 March 2010.

tions to demonstrate the team’s loyalty to the Nimrs. In one instance, the team worked with the commander of 3/25 Marines to create a “good cop/bad cop” drama. In this case the Marines arrested some Albu-Nimr relatives. MSG Marchal publically argued with 3/25’s commander for the release of the relatives. Because Sheikh Reshad’s brother observed Marchal standing up for his relatives, this and other events eventually led the Albu-Nimr tribe to be more trusting of the ODA.⁹⁰

6. Short-term Force Assignment

Despite force shortfalls, RCT-2’s vigorous campaign plan continued. In fact, regimental efforts were reinforced in September when the RCT received additional troops.⁹¹ With two major Iraqi political events looming—the 15 October referendum and 15 December 2005 elections—security was the priority.

Unfortunately, from September 2005 until February 2006, there was a rapid turnover of forces in the Hit area—within these six months, five different units were assigned responsibility for Hit (see Table 2-1). On the one hand, they were there to provide security for the October referendum and December election. But on the other hand, the lack of continuity adversely affected intelligence collection and community relationships. It was not surprising the citizens of Hit did not trust the transient Coalition forces and that they perceived the Coalition as noncommittal and disinterested in the community’s well-being.

Table 2-1. Unit presence in Hit September 2005–March 2008⁹²

Date	Commander	Unit
Sept–Oct 2005	LtCol Jeffrey Chessani	3rd Battalion, 1st Marines
Oct–Dec 2005	LTC Gary Huffman	2nd Battalion, 114 Field Artillery
Nov–Dec 2005	Col James LaVine	13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)
Dec 2005–Feb 2006	Col Kenneth McKenzie	22nd MEU
Feb 2006–Feb 2007	LTC Thomas Graves	TF 1st Battalion, 36 Infantry (TF 1-36)
Jan–Sep 2007	LTC Doug Crissman	TF 2-7 Inf
Aug 2007–Mar 2008	LtCol J.J. Dill	1st Battalion, 7th Marines

From 30 November until 3 December 2005, 2nd Battalion, 114 Field Artillery (FA) and about 700 Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division con-

⁹⁰ Marchal, 21 December 2012.

⁹¹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

⁹² LtCol David Graves, USMC, “Unit Presence in Al Anbar,” May 2001.

ducted Operation IRON HAMMER in Hit.⁹³ The goal was to clear the Hai al Bekr area of Hit (see Figure 2-5) from AQI and to increase security for the upcoming elections. Perhaps more critical, the operation allowed the Coalition to repair and reopen the Hit Bridge that had been destroyed by the insurgency in September.⁹⁴ IRON HAMMER was a collaborative effort, combining the efforts of the IA, the US Army Civil Affairs team in Hit, ODA 545, and the ANGLICO (Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) team. Despite 2-114 FA's quick rotation, before it left Hit the unit had managed the 15 October constitutional referendum and planted the seeds for a secure election in December.⁹⁵

On 15 January 2006, the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) along with the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division (1/2/7 IAD) conducted Operation KOA CANYON in the Hit/Baghdadi area. The mission was to capture or kill insurgents and locate and destroy weapon caches.⁹⁶ Just two weeks later, the IA and 22nd MEU conducted another operation called SMOKEWAGON. Again, Iraqi and Coalition forces went door-to-door searching for insurgents and weapons caches.⁹⁷

7. Setting the Conditions for Success

In February of 2006, force inconsistencies in the Hit area were finally addressed by assigning the US Army's 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry (1-36), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Graves, to Hit for an entire year. At the same time that 1-36, now Task Force 1-36, conducted a relief-in-place/transfer-of-authority, responsibility for AO Denver changed from RCT-2 to RCT-7, which was commanded by Colonel Blake Crowe.

The situation that TF 1-36 inherited in Hit was dismal. Captain Robert Secher, a Marine advisor to the IA offered his description of the war torn city:

Hit is a lawless town with most of the fight in the north (the insurgents control/influence the southern part) as we convoyed at high speeds thru the town (speed is the best defense against IEDs) you could clearly see the look on [sic] the eyes of the people: sick and tired. First, a generation of Saddam, now insurgents and occupiers. Everyone makes promises and no one keeps them.⁹⁸

Because so many different units had cycled through Hit during 2005, the Iraqi forces suffered greatly. They had no consistent training agenda, hence, LTC Graves decided to focus on training them. His unit began working with Military Transition Teams. He recalled:

⁹³ "Operation Iron Hammer." According to Estes, *US Marines in Iraq*, p. 128, 2/1 Marines and the Desert Protectors also participated in IRON HAMMER.

⁹⁴ Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good."

⁹⁵ Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good."

⁹⁶ "Operation Koa Canyon Update" US Marine Corps press release, 19 January 2006.

⁹⁷ "Operation Smokewagon" Global Security.org website. <www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oif-smokewagon.htm>.

⁹⁸ Dan Ephron and Christian Caryl, "A Centurion's Emails," *Newsweek* (6 November 2006).

Coalition forces in this area are still doing a lot of combat operations, but those [operations] are done with the idea that they will buy us breathing space, and give us time to train the Iraqi army.⁹⁹

TF 1-36 also focused on the police in Hit. The previous ODA team had facilitated the creation of an IP station in Zuwayyah (see Figure 2-5). The unit capitalized on this initiative and expanded IP stations to Tal Aswad, Hai al Bekr, and Kubaysa.

The 5th Special Forces Group, ODA 545 arrived for its second tour in August of 2006. Master Sergeant Martin Moore and Lieutenant Colonel Martin Adams were veterans of a previous tour in the area and noticed that the city had become much more violent.¹⁰⁰ Five-to-seven “significant activities”—such as an IED or sniper attack—per day was the norm. Brent Lindeman, team leader of 545, said that he and the team sergeant agreed that “the insurgents were winning in Hit.” He went on to explain:

In August 2006, the insurgency was definitely stronger than the counterinsurgency in Hit. The enemy owned the city and the city council. The enemy owned the roads. They took away the Coalition’s freedom of maneuver in town through the use of snipers and IEDs. And, thanks to IEDs, the enemy also took away the Coalition’s freedom of maneuver on all the major lines of communication. The police were not being properly funded and resourced by the Iraqi government. And the IA battalion in Hit was vastly under-strength.¹⁰¹

To build situational awareness, ODA 545 began taking dismounted tours and conducting combat patrols with the IA Scouts (formerly the Desert Protectors).¹⁰² The team worked with the newly hired district police chief, General Ibrahim Hamid Jaza, and Colonel Shaban from Baghdadi to break up an insurgent checkpoint system that had frustrated TF 1-36 because of its early warning system.¹⁰³

In October, ODA 545 and TF 1-36 joined efforts to move the IA Scouts from under the control of the Iraqi Army to an independent SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) element assigned to the IPs in the district. The Scouts had suffered from poor treatment in

⁹⁹ Jim Garamone, “Soldiers See Successful Iraqi Army as Ticket Home,” American Forces Press Service, 2 June 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Master Sergeant Martin Moore interview at the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) headquarters at Camp Victory, Iraq, Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, 21 April 2010. Lieutenant Colonel Martin Adams, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, VA, 9 December 2010.

¹⁰¹ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

¹⁰² Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, former minister of defense, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, his home, Baghdad, Iraq, 24 April 2010. When the Albu-Mahal tribe rebelled against AQI, Sadun developed a program with the Coalition, Albu-Mahl tribe, and Iraqi Government to recruit those tribal members into an organization called the Desert Protectors. Initially, they were to be scouts for the ISF in the area.

¹⁰³ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

the Shia majority IA and morale had bottomed out. It was time to put their skills to more effective use as members of the IP SWAT platoons.¹⁰⁴

The situation began to improve. The IP stations in the neighborhoods of Hit were generally successful in keeping insurgents out. The men of ODA 545 had successfully made connections with tribes surrounding the Hit District, but the center of the city remained overrun by insurgents.

In all, TF 1-36 had a rough tour and took many casualties, but by focusing on the IP, it laid the ground work for the next unit. By the end of its deployment, the unit had created a “700 man district police force and opened four additional police stations, expanding far beyond the al Phurat police force in Zuwayyah.”¹⁰⁵

8. A Turnaround

On 7 February 2007, a task force built around 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry, Task Force 2-7 (TF 2-7), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Doug Crissman, assumed responsibility for Hit. Eight days later, the IA, IP, and Coalition forces launched Operation SHURTA NASIR—*Police Victory*. When TF 2-7 came in, the time was right to go into the city center. CPT Lindeman said, “The whole point of the operation was to support an Iraqi-led, Iraqi-executed plan with minimal numbers of Americans in the background, and with the ODA and the PTT [Police Transition Team] advising the IPs.”¹⁰⁶

In short, soldiers from TF 2-7 and from 1/2/7 IAD began by sealing off the city. The SWAT team, IPs, and members of the ODA entered on 16 February. The SWAT team focused on the mosques and population control. Military forces then moved in and cleared neighborhoods and conducted targeted raids. One of the ODA teams took over a building on Cherry Street, one of the most dangerous roads, which would become the new Cherry Street IP station.¹⁰⁷

On 27 February, two days after the operation ended, LTC Crissman walked down Cherry Street with Mayor Hikmat and chief of police Hamid (see Figure 2-7). This event surprised the local population as well as the insurgents.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Moore interview, 21 April 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

¹⁰⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Doug Crissman, interview via telephone with Dr. William Knarr and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 7 October 2011; and Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

¹⁰⁷ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

¹⁰⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Crissman, “Commander’s Comments,” *The Cottonbaler Newsletter* (Spring 2007). <www.cottonbalers.com/newsletters/pdf/2007-02.pdf>.



Image courtesy LTC Crissman

Figure 2-7. LTC Crissman (right) walks down Cherry Street with the mayor (center) and chief of police (left) two days after SHURTA NASIR

9. “We Stay, We Win”

By the end of the operation, US and Iraqi forces had rooted out the insurgent elements in the city. Despite that success, Coalition forces were suspicious that many insurgents left the city before the operation having captured only 13. The operation also resulted in the establishment of two new IP stations and several police checkpoints. The message to the population was that the terrorists had left and the IP were now fully in control of the city center for the first time.¹⁰⁹

The success of SHURTA NASIR spread to nearby cities of Mohammedi and Abu Tiban, causing them to flip in favor of the IP. These events can be credited to General Hamid who had sent a group of his IPs to assist their efforts.

General Ibrahim Hamid Jaza was known by Iraqis and Coalition forces as a hero figure who took a strong stand against AQI. During SHURTA NASIR he was critical to all elements of the operation. Many attributed Hit’s increased security turnaround to the police

¹⁰⁹ Moore interview, 21 April 2010; and Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

chief's harsh tactics against the insurgents. Reports, however, of General Hamid's corruption—freeing prisoners for money, conducting extra-judicial killings, accepting bribes from insurgents, and allowing prostitution—were rife. The Iraqi Government had planned “Operation Police Call” to arrest Hamid; however, on 29 May, before the plan was complete, LTC Crissman arrested the police chief based on intelligence reports that said that if the Coalition forces did not apprehend Hamid for his crimes, then the population would take on the task itself and undercut the credibility of the rule-of-law efforts. In a dramatic moment, LTC Crissman went from posing with Hamid (Figure 2-8) for a commemorative picture to reaching over, drawing Hamid's hand-gun, and arresting him.¹¹⁰



Image used with permission, Michael Yon

Figure 2-8. LTC Crissman (left) posed with General Hamid (center) moments before he arrested him with his own hand-gun. At right is the interpreter.

During the next few months, Coalition and the IP operations continued to keep the insurgents out.¹¹¹ A new police chief was hired, Colonel Sallah Rasheed al-Gaoud, who was extremely experienced and who focused on professionalizing the IP.¹¹² Money from US and Iraqi Government sources was used to rebuild infrastructure, start local businesses, and repair people's homes. The number of volunteers for the IP continued to grow and the newly-elected city council began to meet three times a week.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Michael Yon, “The Final Option,” Michael Yon Online Magazine, 30 May 2007, <www.michaelyon-online.com/the-final-option.htm>.

¹¹¹ LtCol Douglas Crissman, “Commander's Comments,” *The Cottonbaler Newsletter* (Summer 2007) <www.cottonbalers.com/newsletters/pdf/2007-03.pdf>.

¹¹² Corporal Adam Johnston, “Rise and Fall of a Hero,” DVIDS News, 15 August 2007.

¹¹³ Crissman, “Commander's Comments,” (Summer 2007).

By Fall 2007, Hit was considered stable. Success became self-sustaining. Once the population got a taste of what life without AQI was like, it was more difficult than ever for insurgents to influence the area.

C. Themes, Lessons, and Leads

Each volume in this study provides themes, lessons, and leads as highlighted by significant events in each AO. Below are the themes, lessons, and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in the Hadithah–Hit Corridor. In addition, those events that were significant and similar (or dissimilar) to other areas of Al Anbar are noted.

Throughout 2003, 2004, and much of 2005, the Corridor was under AQI's influence due to the Coalition force priorities in other areas of Iraq and their inability to generate and sustain combined, permanent, persistent presence in the Corridor. The Coalition reacted to events in Fallujah by deploying Marine units from the Corridor to Fallujah. This left the population unprotected and resulted in a loss of trust. As one US battalion commander described it, they were destined to a cycle of “clear, abandon, clear, abandon,...” until they received the necessary force structure to maintain a presence and protect the population. This dynamic was also true of the SOF elements assigned to the area. Special Forces ODAs were assigned to the area in January 2004 and made some significant progress in gaining support of the Albu-Nimr tribe in the Hit area. However, before security was self-sustaining, the ODA was withdrawn in July 2004 due to other priorities.

Despite those conditions, there were a number of noteworthy initiatives that, if allowed to continue, would have made significant contributions to the effort. One was the CAP program initiated by US Marine units in both Hadithah and Hit. Another initiative was using SOF to work in parallel with the conventional forces to engage with the tribes and work by, with, and through them to help defeat the insurgency. Given that background, the comments below start in 2005 with the return of Coalition forces to the Corridor after the battles in Fallujah.

1. Combined, Permanent, Persistent Presence

It was not until the fall of 2005, when the Coalition and GOI dedicated additional forces to the Corridor, both Coalition and Iraqi, that the situation started to improve. This included the redeployment of SOF to the area and the assignment of elements of the newly formed 7th Iraqi Army Division.¹¹⁴ With these improvements, Coalition forces were able to conduct clearing operations reinforced with combined (Iraqi and Coalition) presence to hold the area. With the priority to Hadithah, however, Hit didn't receive a permanent assignment of forces until February 2006 with the deployment of TF 1-36.

¹¹⁴ The purpose of the additional forces was to provide security for the upcoming referendum in October and election in December 2005. Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

The additional forces enabled the recruitment and development of the Iraqi Police in the area. The importance of the local police force cannot be overstated, but the police could not be developed until they had a viable backup in the form of Coalition and Iraqi forces. Once there was a noticeable improvement in the local security forces, the local government could then stand up and begin to operate.

In addition to security forces, checkpoint, outposts, bases and operations, other population control measures were employed. For example, in the fall of 2006, the Coalition constructed eight-foot high dirt berms around the Triad. The berming of the area, coupled with vehicle registration, controlled entrances, the collection of biometric data, and issuance of identification cards, all had a devastating effect on the insurgents' ability to gain access to the population. But, key to this was the development of the police force and the emergence and support of local Iraqi leaders such as Farouq and Shaban into key security positions.

2. An Awakening

The progression and development of the Anbar Awakening can be characterized as, "The Sunnis, 1. Rejected the terrorists (AQI), 2. Joined the Coalition in the fight against AQI and other insurgent extremists, and 3. Supported and worked with the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces."¹¹⁵ There are many specific examples of the Awakening events, each with its own local character. As an example, 1. Sheikh Sattar albu-Risha gained the support of 40 other Ramadi sheiks, rejected AQI in an Emergency decree on 14 September, 2. Partnered with the Coalition to fight AQI, and 3. Supported and worked with, albeit reluctantly, the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces.¹¹⁶ Another example of this occurred in Al Qaim. In both situations the Sunni tribes took the lead and were reluctant to work with the Iraqi Government.

This characterization of the Awakening, in general, holds true for the residents of the Corridor as well. However, as Mayor Hakim of the Hadithah Triad points out it, the awakening in Hadithah was different from the awakening in Al Qaim or Ramadi. In those cities a tribe or collection of tribes, led by a tribal leader, revolted against AQI. Legitimacy was established when the tribal militia joined GOI-sponsored security organizations such as the IA or IP. That didn't necessarily occur in Hadithah. As Hakim indicated,

¹¹⁵ Brigadier General Sean MacFarland, former commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, Ramadi, 2005–06, interview with Dr. William Knarr, MacFarland's office, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 13 October 2010. This characterization of the Awakening resulted from discussion with MacFarland. According to him, Sheikh Sattar's characterization, "We awakened when we realized that the true enemy was the takfiris, the extremists, and that the Coalition was our friend," did not necessarily include the Government of Iraq or, specifically, the Al Anbar Governor. However, MacFarland insisted that they, the Government of Iraq and provincial governor, be part of the effort. He had to make that connection to the provincial and central government.

¹¹⁶ Colonel Tony Deane, former commander, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor in Ramadi, Iraq, from June to November 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr at Deane's office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 12 October 2010.

...nobody led the *sahawa* in Hadithah. There was no popular militia to fight the *Sahawa*....the leaders of the IP, the tribes, and the Coalition forces persuaded “the people [to] join the IP and resist the bad guys. It was official. They joined the IP. This way, we established the security in Hadithah. That [was how] Hadithah’s *sahawa* occurred.”¹¹⁷

One might argue that the Al Jugayfi was the prominent tribe in the area because its tribesmen dominated the local IP ranks. However, it wasn’t the Al Jugayfi paramount sheikh or one of the contesting sheikhs that ultimately led a tribal uprising or convinced its tribal militia to join the legitimate rank and file of the GOI. The early introduction of the CAP might account for this different path to the Awakening. As an example, the CAP and immediate introduction of the residents to the security requirements may have preempted the slower and more complex process of any tribal organized militia taking the lead on security and then partnering with the Coalition and GOI. Unfortunately, due to other events such as Fallujah in 2004, the CAP lost continuity and the awakening in Hadithah sputtered.

Awakening events in Baghdadi were also different. BrigGen Reist credits Col Shaban as the catalyst for the Awakening in the Corridor months before the Awakening in Ramadi. Although Shaban was a proven leader, he was not a tribal leader and he started to form the Baghdadi police force on his own to counter AQI. As in the Hadithah case, this model worked, but was different than the general Awakening narrative.

Finally, Hit was also different. The Albu-Nimr tribe, in general, had sided with the Coalition almost from the beginning. As an example: In 2003, Sheikh Bezi al-Gaoud’s offer to provide Major General Charles Swannack, Commander, 82nd Airborne Division, tribesmen for security; SFODA teams worked with the Albu-Nimr tribe in Hit in 2004 and later in 2005-2009; in 2004 Talal al-Gaoud, son of Sheikh Bezi, linked the Coalition with the insurgents for talks in Jordan; Former Governor of Al Anbar Fasal al-Gaoud contacted the Marines on behalf of the Albu-Mahal in May 2005, and so on (discussed in more detail below).

There were also a number of similarities among these cases—the importance of the police as the pivot point for security in all locations, for example. It was only after the IP were in place and the connection to the population strengthened that the conditions were set for local government to develop and operate.

Additionally, an underlying theme was the Coalition’s recognition that it needed to work with the people and gain their confidence if it was ever going to counter AQI. Most have agreed that it was not just an Awakening on the part of the Iraqis, but also on the part of the Coalition. Making that distinction and knowing when and how to start the turn from

¹¹⁷ Hakim interview, 14 April 2010.

combat operations to stability operations is complex. It requires finesse and an understanding of second- and third-order effects of the unit's actions.

For example, 3/1 cleared Hadithah during Operation RIVER GATE (September 2005) by using mine clearing line charges, marking cleared houses with spray paint, destroying bridges residents would need for daily activities. Hakim added,

They also demolished some of the schools and some of the government buildings by using the excuse that there were insurgents inside...being a liberator, you should have won the support of the peaceful civilians. This bad behavior created enemies.¹¹⁸

Another example was the Hadithah massacre in November 2005. Some have asked, "What drove the Coalition down this path?" LtCol Cooling suggests that Marines from 3/1 were veterans of high-intensity combat operations from Fallujah the year before; all of a sudden they moved into a stability phase and there was no significant operational pause for them to reset and retrain, and to do what Cooling called an "in-stride rules of engagement change."¹¹⁹ He felt that this inability to recalibrate relative to the ROE likely contributed to that tragic incident.

3. Media and Information Operations

The Hadithah massacre raises some important considerations for media and information operations. LtCol Donnellan mentions that the media was more emphatic than the people about the Hadithah massacre.

The big eye-opener for me was that the incident did not resonate so much more dramatically with the people than perhaps any other sad story that happens in war, whereas AQI really latched on to it because they saw the attention it got in the Western media. And so, it had grown a life of its own again within the Triad, whereas for Colonel Cooling's first three or four months there, it was not the rallying cry that he heard when he held the tribal or sheikh meetings.¹²⁰

4. A Network of Relationships and Events

Tribal engagement and relationships were significant throughout the corridor, but uniquely so in Hit because of the importance of the Albu-Nimr tribe in general and the Al Gaoud family in particular. This relationship spanned the local to the national and connected the various Awakenings throughout Al Anbar. Examples follow.

In 2003, Sheikh Bezi Majil Nijris al-Gaoud approached MG Swannack, Commander, 82nd Airborne Division, and Keith Mines, Coalition Provisional Authority Govern-

¹¹⁸ Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah Mayor, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, at his office in Hadithah, 14 April 2010.

¹¹⁹ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

¹²⁰ Donnellan interview, 16 March 2010.

ance Coordinator for Al Anbar with an offer to supply tribesman as provincial security forces if the Coalition funded and armed them. Although Swannack and Mines saw this as a great idea, it was turned down by the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad.¹²¹

MSG Marchal's identification and linkage to the Albu-Nimr tribal leadership was critical to the recruitment of hundreds of the Nimrawi tribesmen into the Desert protectors/scouts to combat AQI.¹²² SOF's efforts paid off when it and the Albu-Nimr tribe coordinated Operation SHURTA NASIR along with TF 2-7. The operation was an IO victory that started Hit down the path of improved security.

Talal al-Gaoud, son of Sheikh Bezi, a businessman in Amman, Jordan was instrumental in setting up meetings in Jordan as early as 2004 between the Coalition forces and Iraqi Sunni leadership to include meetings with the insurgents.¹²³ Colonel Michael Walker, former 3rd Civil Affairs Group Commander in Iraq from February to September 2004 attributed the start of the Awakening movement in Iraq to relationships the MEF fostered with the Iraqis in 2004, specifically with the Al Gaoud family in Amman, Jordan.¹²⁴

Former Governor of Al Anbar Fasal al-Gaoud contacted the Americans at Camp Fallujah on behalf of the Albu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim in May 2005 when AQI was purging the Al Qaim area of Mahalawis.¹²⁵

In a larger context, Sheikh Bezia was a part of a network of notable tribal leaders, former Iraqi military, and former insurgents that found sanctuary in Jordan, because living and working in Iraq had become too dangerous. The tribal leaders regularly spoke with Sheikh Bezi on the phone and sometimes visited him in Amman. The older sheikh was able to offer advice and guidance, as he had access to the larger picture of what was happening in Anbar, because of his connection to the network of Anbaris, both resident and expatriate.

Al Gaoud representatives of the Albu-Nimr tribe participated in Sheikh Sattar Albu Risha's 14 September announcement of the Sahawa in Ramadi and were signatories to the emergency decree that signaled the beginning of the Ramadi Awakening.

Additionally, Sheikh Sattar shared connections with anti-AQI leaders in Hit and Hadithah. The sheikh traveled to Hit on many occasions to meet with tribal leaders.

¹²¹ Mr. Keith Mines, Coalition Provisional Authority Governance Coordinator for Al Anbar, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 13 March 2011. He went on to say that this wasn't so much an Awakening as it was a simple business deal.

¹²² Marchal, 21 December 2012.

¹²³ David Rose, "Heads in the Sand," *Vanity Fair* web exclusive (12 May 2012) <www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2009/05/iraqi-insurgents200905>.

¹²⁴ Colonel Michael Walker, interview via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 6 January 2011.

¹²⁵ Hanah Allam and Mohammed al-Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 May 2005.

Sheikh Sa'id of the Jugayfi tribe in Hadithah met with Sattar on several occasions, as did Col Shaban of Baghdadi (see Figure 2-9).¹²⁶



Figure 2-9. Sheikh Sattar and Colonel Shaban meet

General Hamid also had connection to outside influences, mainly through his membership to the militant arm of the Sahawa, Thawar al Anbar. General Hamid often met at Sheikh Sattar's compound in Ramadi along with sheikhs from Albu-Souda, Albu-Mahal, Albu-Risha, Albu-Tiban, Albu-Nimr in Barwanna, Obeidi in Baghdadi, as well as a few others.¹²⁷

The point is many Americans perceive events in Ramadi as disconnected from previous events or worse yet, don't recognize the relevance of previous events; however, this study shows that the Iraqis saw and leveraged those connections and relationships. That began in 2004 with the Battles for Fallujah, sparked in Al Qaim with the first significant revolt of a tribe against AQI, saw the emergence of courageous Iraqi leaders such as Colonels Farouq and Shaban and Mayor Hakim in the Corridor to organize and lead local police forces as well as local governance, was strengthened by the involvement of influential Iraqi tribes and families to connect the various events, and culminated with the *Sahawa* in Ramadi. Rather than the beginning, Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* was the culmination of events and resulted in a continuous rather than a disconnected story.

¹²⁶ Sheikh Sa'id, Sheikh of Al-Jughayfi tribe, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, his home, Hadithah, 15 March 2011.

¹²⁷ Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good."

Appendix A. Coalition Perspectives

Notes on conventions used in the transcripts

- Ranks. The first time a service member is identified, their rank is spelled out; subsequently, their rank is abbreviated in accordance with their service affiliation. Ranks are spelled out in the footnotes.
- Time “hacks” on transcripts correspond to video so they can be used to identify areas to use as clips for the movie, the DVD and for further research into specific areas.
- For al- or Al- or Al in a proper name: When “al” is in the middle of the name, in a last name, for example, it should be lower case with a hyphen, such as Nuri al-Maliki. If the name is by itself then the “al” is capitalized, as in Al-Maliki.

The majority of tribal names begin with the term *albu*, a formal characterization of *the*. When the tribal name is included in an individual’s name, the prefix “al-” is added and the tribal name changes slightly, usually with the addition of *awi* or *i* at the end. For example, Albu-Risha becomes al-Rishawi and al-Assafi denotes a member of the Assaf tribe or Albu-Assaf.

Table A-1 lists the commanders and units responsible for the Hadithah-Hit AO from 2003 to 2008. It also provides the reader an appreciation for the number of units that rotated through the area. Readers can refer to the table for a specific timeframe to see what unit was assigned responsibility for the area. Rapid turnover of units responsible for Hit during timeframe September 2005 to January 2006 is indicated at Figure 2-7.

Table A-1. Units Responsible for Hadithah and/or-Hit, 2003–08¹

Deployment Dates	Unit Commander	Unit	Comments
March–4 May 2003		CJSOTF-W	
May 2003–February 2004		3 rd Sq/3ACR	
February–14 July 2004	LtCol Brian McCoy	3/4 Marines	April depart for Fallujah; May return
February–14 July 2004	LtCol Phil Skuta	2/7 Marines	Baghdadi-Hit AO; April depart for Fallujah; May return
14 July–October 2004	LtCol Gary Brandl	1/8 Marines	Oct depart for Fallujah
October 2004–15 March 2005	Various units in RCT-7 and then RCT-2 covered the AO during Al Fajr in No-		

¹ Unless indicated, the units were stationed in Hadithah/Al Asad.

vember 2004 and the elections in January 2005

15 March–21 September 2005	LtCol Lionel Urquhart	3/25 Marines	Jun 05, IPs beheaded; 1 Aug, sniper team ambushed
21 Sept 2005–26 Mar 2006	LtCol Jeffrey Chessani	3/1 Marines	19 Nov 05 Hadithah massacre; 2/27 IA arrives to partner with 3/1
26 March–24 September 2006	LtCol Norm Cooling	3/3 Marines	Mar 06, Col Farouq new IP Chief; Marine Company collocated with Shaban in Baghdadi
24 Sept 2006–3 April 2007	LtCol James Donnellan	2/3 Marines	Late 2006 Berming of Triad and Hakim appointed mayor of Hadithah; Attempted assassination on Shaban in Oct
January 2006-January 2007	LTC Thomas Graves	TF 1-36 IN	Hit
January 2007–March 2008	LTC Crissman	TF 2-7 IN	Hit, Jan- Sep 2007 and Rutbah, Sep 2007 to March 2008
3 April 2007–12 Oct 2007	LtCol Chip Bierman	1/3 Marines	
12 Oct 2007–13 March 2008	LtCol Dave Bellon	3/23 Marines	

Subject: Interview with Colonel Bryan McCoy, USMC, Former Commander, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines

Col Bryan McCoy, USMC, commanded the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines (3/4) in the Hadithah area of Iraq from February to July 2004. Col McCoy initiated a successful Combined Action Platoon (CAP) program in Hadithah early-on but suffered some setbacks when the battlion deployed to Fallujah from April to May 2004 for Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE.² During their absence, the insurgents gained a foothold in Hadithah and once 3/4 returned, it took them the rest of their deployment to regain control of Hadithah. This non-persistent presence by Coalition forces became a common occurrence during the next year and lead to the growth of the insurgency in the Hadithah area.



Col McCoy was interviewed on 16 March 2010 at CENTCOM, Tampa, Florida by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and MajGen Tom Jones, USMC, Retired. The following is his account of events during the period he commanded 3/4 Marines in Iraq.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Please provide the background on your unit's pre-deployment activities such as training, the site survey, then discuss the conditions in the area of Hadithah when you arrived and the sequence of events during your rotation.

Colonel McCoy: Starting with the end of OIF I [Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I] for 3d Battalion 4th Marines, we redeployed from OIF I in May of 2003, and then deployed to Iraq again in December of 2003, so we had just five months at home station. In those five months we conducted all of our pre-deployment training programs, which we did ourselves. At the time there was no Marine Corps program per se—there was no Title 10 audit for units going forward, there was no formalized COIN [counterinsurgency] training, so it was a lot of self-help to include what the division set up for us to accomplish. So in those

² The acronym CAP stood for Combined Action Program during Vietnam. Although essentially the same concept, in Iraq it stood for Combine Action Platoon, per Colonel Dale Alford briefing on 3/6 Marines in Al Qaim , August 2005 to March 2006, Institute for Defense Analyses, 16 Feb 2010

five months I did an abbreviated CAX [Combined Arms Exercise]. It was the normal meat and potatoes CAX, the only thing we cut off was the FINEX [final exercise] at the end, but we had all the combined arms things first. Even though we thought we were going back to a COIN environment, we still focused on those absolute fundamentals, and they paid big dividends for us later. We did an abbreviated Bridgeport [Mountain Warfare Training Center] package where we focused on not just the high adventure skills. Although those were there, we used the environment and the trainers that were there to help us with our small-unit patrolling, which was probably a weak point after OIF I. OIF I was really a battalion and company war knowing that we were going back into a platoon and squad war in a counterinsurgency.

We deployed back to Iraq via Okinawa in December 2003/January 2004. We picked up our equipment set, conducted more COIN training, did our own in-house certification of squads, platoons, at what we thought at the time was the skill sets we needed and then rotated back to Iraq. We came in, picked up MPF [Maritime Preposition Force] gear again, in Kuwait; motor marched it up to Al Asad and then RIP'd [relief-in-place] out with the 3rd Squadron, 3rd ACR [Armored Cavalry Regiment] in Hadithah.

Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, Barwana, Rawah, and Anah was my general battle space and it extended south about half-way between Haqlaniyah and Hit where I had 2/7 Marines adjacent to my south, and 3/7 adjacent to my west out in Al Qaim. [03:03]

We got started right away with COIN as we saw it at the time. Some of the initial guidance we had immediately after the RIP was to put a Marine on every single street corner in Hadithah. We pushed back on that guidance. Not knowing what we didn't know, and even though we had done the map and cultural studies as best as we could, we did a series of what we called "getting to know you" patrols. We started working from outside the city and every day we got a little bit closer and started doing our key leader engagements; so we got to understand the area. Knowing that a blunder early on could set us back and we might never recover if we had messed that up right off the get-go, we were patient for about 7–10 days on running those patrols and then got into the city. [03:33]

One of our caveats for starting the CAP, Combined Action Platoons, was we had to be invited into the city and invited into the police station. That was with guidance from Major General Mattis. The guy I had to convince was Mayor Hawash who was a Sunni of the Jughayfi Tribe, which is the dominant tribe in Hadithah. We were able to win him over in bits and pieces, [04:01] and what I quickly learned was the Iraqis had never won

a war, but had never lost a negotiation at least in the last 100 years, so they were very shrewd at that. Our PTP [pre-deployment training program] accounts for those type of negotiations and key leader engagements now, but it didn't then, so it was really on-the-job training. I think a lot of the lessons we learned early on were integrated into the pre-deployment training program.

It was interesting to see the leverage that he [Hawash] thought he had on us going in. The Army unit left him with the impression that a battalion commander was evaluated on how many projects he [the commander] accomplished and how much money he gave to Hadithah. The money was going straight to the mayor and then being doled out, with a lot of that being skimmed off. When we started doing our initial census patrols and looking around, his neighborhood had all the benefits, but he hadn't been as benevolent with Haqlaniyah and Barwana and they were at the low end of the totem pole. None of the aid was trickling down to them, so that was one of the first things we changed. We made sure he understood that that wasn't the leverage that he had on us, and disabused him of that idea, and that I get paid for making Hadithah a secure place and free of the insurgents. If I had to put a Marine on every street corner cracking skulls, I'll do that, but he's not going to get a dime until we had a secure environment to leverage off of. Or, I could just put this unobtrusive CAP platoon, 18 Marines in his police station, to help him. This police station had been overrun three times in the last six months, police officers scattered, weapons confiscated by the insurgents, and the Army had started from scratch each and every time. [06:20]

First thing we did was move in there probably against the advice of our predecessors who said "All you're going to do is invite attack," which is exactly what happened. We won that first fire fight with the Marines in the police station and that was the traction that got us going. By the time we left, I wouldn't say I could have worn an American flag t-shirt, eating an ice cream cone, walking through the market, but we were getting close to that. [06:50]

We had one operational pause, I would call it, with regards to our COIN efforts when we got pulled down to Fallujah in late March/early-April to respond to what later became VIGILANT RESOLVE. That created about a six-week gap in our efforts.

If I can I'll back up a little bit; one of the other principals going in was that there was not an appetite to build lots of smaller combat outposts beyond the FOBs [forward operating bases]. The thinking was that you're going to have to give up a third of your combat

power to do that. So some of the guidance we had coming down early was, stick with your major operating bases and it would be a commuter-type war—which we’ve learned doesn’t work over time. We articulated, probably one of the first exceptions to that, and that was the deal with Rawah, which was 60 miles away smack dab in between Al Qaim and Hadithah and was a known insurgent support base. [08:09]

We had nothing really between us and them. The early warning systems were in place, but being able to get in there and affect anything on a day-to-day basis wasn’t possible on a routine basis from 60 miles away. We argued for, and got the ability to put a combat outpost that sat right on the other side of the river from it [Rawah], and then we used temporary patrol bases on the other side of the river. We always had somebody on the other side of the river. If you don’t [do that], the enemy uses the river as a moat against you. There was one way across and you just do nothing but take indirect fire all day long if you didn’t do it that way. [08:41] We basically camped right in the enemy’s lap and took Rawah from them in a matter of two or three weeks—there were a few IEDs and a couple of small fire fights. But just the presence alone really cut down on what was a major staging base for foreign fighters flowing through the Syrian border and using Rawah as a way station and then moving on through Hadithah and from Hadithah either to Mosul or down to Baghdad from Ramadi and Fallujah. So we tried to cut the rat line in a couple places there. We had that going in the first six weeks of being there.

It was then that we got called to go down to Fallujah and in a 24-hour period, we pulled the battalion in. We RIP’d with a company from 2/7 Marines out at Rawah, they came out there and took the Rawah position from us, and we RIP’d with a small craft company that was going to hold the fort for us in the town of Hadithah, where the CAP platoon was. I needed the CAP platoon because, for the most part, they were my 81 mortar platoon; we were going down to Fallujah and I certainly needed those. We were there five, six weeks Fallujah, Karma, Zaidon; fighting in those areas. Very kinetic, certainly paying attention to our basics back at CAX—small unit, live fire, maneuver, combined armed assault—paid dividends in all those fights, which was obviously very kinetic and high intensity.

After Fallujah, VIGILANT RESOLVE had died down, we were pulled back into the Hadithah area, and that had gone to seed again, the enemy had back-filled. So as we squeezed Fallujah, they squeezed out and repopulated in to Hadithah, in to Rawah, and in to Anah. [11:03] The company that was left behind, that we had RIP’d with in Rawah, had abandoned the position. They did not keep forces on both sides of the river, and as a

result under fairly consistent indirect fire from medium mortars and 107 rockets, they abandoned and lost the position. We never did reset the company outpost there again, but we did keep a near-constant presence out there, which was logistically a strain without having a combat outpost, but there wasn't the appetite to rebuild this thing. I didn't want to reoccupy the outpost due to the mine clearance issues that we had, the booby traps, victim triggered IEDs.

We spent probably the next month on targeted intel raids, working closely with the ODA [operational detachment alpha], working closely with the SEAL team that was in the area to beat back some of the insurgent cells that had raised up. As an example, we absorbed IEDs for about the first two weeks we were back, IEDs already in the ground waiting for us, and so again I think we did a fairly decent job of attacking, getting things to the left of the boom instead of to the right of the boom. That was lessons learned.

We started what was our modest attempt at forensics of these blast sites, doing plot analysis and just trying to really understand what the whole IED network was about. People took that to the PhD level later on, but just going out and collecting evidence and doing the forensics and then targeting the IED emplacement teams. We had two distinct occasions where we were successful in getting those guys [the enemy placing the IEDs] and opened up route Bronze for us again, which was the main road. After that, the only time I took an IED was right outside Al Asad. We were successful in solving that problem a bit. I know 25th Marines came in and occupied the area after us. It had certainly changed two battalions later; IEDs again were rampant and the enemy had moved into Hadithah.

My COIN experience is really split on either side of Fallujah: so highly kinetic and then, even when we came back, it was more counterterrorism than it was COIN. Even though we were trying to do them hand-in-hand, our efforts were retarded by the big kinetic piece. By the time we RIP'd out with the 1st Battalion 8th Marines [1/8], Gary Brandl's battalion, we had things, we thought, pretty well in hand, as did they, and when they were pulled down to Fallujah II [Operation AL FAJR], they had to uncover the police station at that point. The police station was again attacked and many of the police officers that we had stood up were all killed. [14:34] 1/8 had to come back and start from scratch and Hadithah had really gone to seed after the second Fallujah.

Knarr: You had quite an area, Rawah down to Hit.

McCoy: Well, halfway to Hit, big battle space, we didn't have the comms for it at the time, didn't have the mobility for it at the time. I think we had a total of five up-armored vehi-

cles in the battalion at the time. It was all a challenge, it was all discovery learning for us, being fairly new to COIN, it was a pretty steep learning curve for everybody.

Knarr: You talked about census operations?

McCoy: They were not as sophisticated as they became later in terms of a database, but what we were trying to do was map our human terrain into an overlay so we understood our patch of turf. We understood what neighborhoods were what, the alliances, the economy—so again, it was a more detailed version of the “getting to know you patrols.” Just knowing who’s who in the zoo and who the players were, who was influential politically, economically, religiously, again just who the players were. But later on, the census patrols really turned out to be how many people you got in the house, what are the names, BATing [Biometric Automated Toolset] people, being able to control the population. We didn’t have BATs at the time. Would have loved to have had something like that, it would have made us more effective; wouldn’t have made the job any easier, but it would have made us more effective at it.

Knarr: CAPs—was that an idea you walked in with or did you develop it when you were there?

McCoy: No, I take no credit for it other than reading Bing West’s book and knowing a little bit about the Vietnam War, but that was actually put forward by General Mattis who wanted every battalion to have a CAP capability.

So we developed that. It wasn’t just the 81’s platoon, it just so happened to be the 81’s platoon was commanded by Matt Danner, who was just a very intellectually flexible, culturally adept Marine. At the end of OIF I, when we were in Baghdad and we had gone firm and were starting to work stability and support operations, he demonstrated a knack for the language and for crossing the cultural barriers. So even after just three weeks at Baghdad, when we actually pulled out and RIP’d with the 3rd ID, the little neighborhood that he had taken over threw him a big going away party. So in employing your people in accordance with their capabilities, he was my pick and his Marines along with him, some of them anyhow to be the nucleus of that CAP platoon. They had the ability to cross cultural barriers, not be the ugly American, understand the nuances of the job that we were trying to do and they were very effective and built some pretty strong alliances early on. [17:29]

Knarr: In fact, we read the article about Matt, which was really pretty good.³ Themes: As you step back and look at Hadithah, what are some of the themes that prevail? As an example, 3/4 left to go to Fallujah in April and then 1/8 left for Fallujah in November. What were the implications?

McCoy: We've learned over and over again that if you don't have the persistent presence and that level of commitment, you're just not going to gain traction with the population; you're not there to protect the population, be focused on the population. It was a lost year practically. [19:27] And trying to feel out the nexus between running counterterrorism and then conducting COIN and then stability and support operations, which is what it was being called at the time, trying to figure out what the right balance of that was, was interesting and then just organizing ourselves to deal with that.

We learned quickly that companies needed their own op cells, they needed their own intel cells, we messed around with it, but didn't come up with the program. Joe L'Etoile was one of the first to actually deliberately develop that concept.

I think over time as you pull the string on where we are now, our ability to conduct COIN, how we train, man and equip to do that, you can draw that string all the way back through the end of OIF I, where we started learning these lessons. I think it's just a testament to the learning organization that we have in the Marine Corps, the free flow of ideas, and the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned standing up and really coming from nothing to best of breed in short period of time. It's been exciting to watch that: our first clumsy steps at counterinsurgency to where we are now which, is really varsity level, PhD level stuff. It's pretty impressive.

Knarr: FM 3-24 was published in December 2006. As you look back today, what is right about 3-24 and how might you revise it to reflect some of the lessons you've learned?

McCoy: I don't know that I would revise it. Nothing is a pat template. Doctrine is a great starting point but after that, at the end of the day, we as officers get paid for our judgment and to assess a situation on its merits and to apply the doctrine that works. I wouldn't throw anything out, I wouldn't change anything. If anything, I would just say there are 5,000 years of recorded military history out there, 3-24 isn't the very first book on COIN, so there's lots of experience beyond that. It's a pretty decent How To and it's

³ John Koopman, "Marines Seal Bonds of Trust/Special Unit Wants to Wind Hearts and Minds," SFGate.com, 4 July 2004, http://articles.sfgate.com/2004-07-04/news/17434139_1_haditha-iraqi-police-station-marine.

a good blue print, but there was already plenty out there, it just wasn't one stop shopping, and it wasn't our current doctrine. But there's plenty out there on how to conduct counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism.

Knarr: You mentioned some names. You talked about the Mayor.

McCoy: Hawash.

Knarr: Is he still over there?

McCoy: I don't know. He was arrested I think a couple of iterations after me. I never fully trusted the guy, knew he was dirty to some extent, but I didn't know if he was, never had any indications that he was tied to the insurgency, but he was just tied to the cultural graft. We marginalized his ability to do that with how we paid our CERP [Commander's Emergency Response Program] funds and all that, he just didn't get the check directly, so we provided that rigor and transparency to manage that program.

A name escapes me now, one of the police Lieutenants, Chief of Police Hassan was murdered later. He was murdered in Fallujah during the 2nd Fallujah, as was his second son. Sabir was one of the main chief Lieutenants, had been a police officer in Baghdad before. He was from Hadithah, his family was from there, he was one of the stalwarts, he had moved back to Baghdad to get involved and do police work when the 2nd Fallujah happened, so he survived. Then I know Matt Danner is still in contact with him from time to time.

Knarr: Sounds like we ought to talk to Matt Danner. You know Dale and I are supposed to go over there in April. Who would you recommend we talk to?

McCoy: I would be interested to see who's still alive in Anah. The police chief was good. Anah was really a pretty clean city there for a while and very forthcoming. They had a good competent police force, and we learned after the first night if there was somebody I wanted, or that the ODA or the SEAL team wanted, instead of coming in and fast roping helicopters or doing a ground assault and then blowing in doors, all I had to do was drive into town, grab the police chief and say, "I want to go here to this guy and get him." We'd go down there and knock on the door and take him with his police force. Very effective! From what I understand, later he was run out of town by the insurgents, maybe a year or so later when 3/25 Marines was there. The story was he had been tortured and run off, so he was not killed last I heard. It would be interesting to see how they are doing now.

Knarr: What'd I miss? What would you add?

McCoy: Now it's a thinking man's game. Anybody that's done it will tell you that it's different town to town, neighborhood to neighborhood, personality by personality. And what it really comes down to is building those personal relationships and staying focused on the population and the security of that population up front. It was very enticing to look for the big fight. It's very enticing to want to do the CT [counterterrorism] missions and kick in doors, and grab bad guys. Those operations have their place, and any time the enemy gives you a chance to kill him, you need to, but that's not going to win it in the long run. It's about staying focused on the near-term security of the population and the long-term projects that separate that insurgent from the population. [26:16]

Easy to talk about, hard to do, and it's a lot of hard work. Keeping score and measuring your progress is difficult, but you need to figure out a way to do it and figure out what the next action is. At first it seems the problems are almost overwhelming, you can't get uniforms for the police, you can't get weapons for the police, you can't get cars or radios for the police, you can't get the CERP funds kicked loosed because they are still tied up somewhere, you've got more ground to cover than you have radios and vehicles or anything else, so all this seems fairly daunting. But the name of the game is just doing a good mission analysis as always, and prioritizing your efforts and just keep chipping away. Every situation is different. That's what I would leave you with.

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Subject: Interview with Colonel Norman Cooling, former Commander 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines

Colonel Norman Cooling commanded 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3) in the Hadithah area of Iraq from March to September 2006. At that time 3/3 Marines was responsible for the Hadithah Triad, which included Haqlaniya and Barwanah. Additionally he was assigned responsibility of the Baghdadi area. LtCol Cooling's battalion played a crucial role in developing the Iraqi 2nd Battalion of the 27th Brigade (2/27), 7th Iraqi Division, located in Hadithah and reestablishing the Hadithah police force. Additionally, 3/3 was able to locate and recruit Col Farouq who played a significant role, as the police chief, in developing the Hadithah police force during 2006–07.



Col Cooling was interviewed at the Mountain Warfare Training Center on 7 May 2010 by Major General Thomas Jones, USMC, Retired.

MajGen Tom Jones: We've discussed events in Iraq and what went on in Anbar, and of course Hadithah has been central to the discussion. Please provide your perspective of events in Hadithah and how those events fit into the larger context of Al Anbar and Iraq.

Colonel Norman Cooling, USMC: Events in Hadithah and Al Anbar at large were a result of a number of oscillations in strategy at the policy and the senior operational levels that eventually culminated in the Awakening. I think we were learning at the strategic and operational levels, as we went through that conflict, the things necessary to bring the Awakening to fruition. In many ways at the strategic level, at the beginning, we contributed to the viability of the insurgency. In order to understand what was going on in Hadithah, you really have to take it from that broad view point.

At the time, I don't think any of us at the tactical execution level had as clear an understanding as we do now, but we did have some inclinations that that was the case. What I mean is when we did Operation IRAQI FREEDOM [OIF] I and the march up, the Marine Corps settled back down into the Diwaniya area, the Shia portion of Iraq in the stability phase of OIF I. Everybody, of course, anticipated in the planning phases that the Shia portion would be the more volatile. I'm not quite sure why, and I think everybody in hindsight wonders why we made that assumption. Of course it proved to be false, but in any event, the most volatile portion of our battlespace at that time was the part that bor-

dered Baghdad—the Sunni area, the small portion of the Sunni area that we had that was adjacent to Al Anbar.

At that time the Marine Corps was a force in readiness and expeditionary by nature. Although we had a long history in small wars and counterinsurgency, we were very conventionally focused in OIF I in conjunction with the stated strategic objectives. As the situation changed, Ambassador Bremer and Lieutenant General Sanchez seemed to wrestle with how they were going to approach the stability phase. As an example, I saw that as early as OIF I in terms of how we were going to deal with Sadr in Najaf. Additionally, there was a major point of contention at the tactical level in turning all the Iraqi Security Forces into unemployed, disenfranchised people [by dissolving the Iraqi Army and de-Ba’athification]. I think everybody is starting to get a very clear picture that that was not the best decision and contributed to the insurgency.

As much as we saw it as Marines in the Shia areas, the Army was seeing that to a much greater degree in Al Anbar. The Sunnis were really the guys who were, in a relative sense, losing power in Iraq and were largely paying a greater price for it. Initially, the established Ba’athist-oriented Sunni leadership seemed to set back and watch. When it became clear that they were being disenfranchised, that’s when they started supporting an active insurgency in Al Anbar.

Hadithah is a principal urban area on the route from Syria into Iraq. It’s really the first significant urban area that you’ll come to as you move from the Syrian border into Baghdad. In the beginning, the 82nd Airborne Division obviously received criticism for their approach and how they handled Al Anbar, but I’m not sure that wasn’t shaped as well by the operational and strategic guidance and this wrestling with “How are we going to deal with the stability phase of OIF?” Then of course the stability phase turned into an active, aggressive, and live counterinsurgency.

Jones: As the folks became disenfranchised? [6:59]

Cooling: Yes, Sir. Initially, many of the people in Hadithah and towns throughout Al Anbar accepted the fact that the Ba’athists, Saddam Hussein’s regime, were overthrown and many of them cooperated, at least initially, with the US Forces in their area. So, the Army units that were initially in Hadithah really fell in on the existing police forces and the like. Obviously, they had internal divisions within Al Anbar among the Sunni Muslims and within tribes about what should be the proper way ahead to cooperate with the Americans. But we rapidly proved that we didn’t have the force density on the ground to ensure security.

All of that is an important backdrop, because it leads to when the Marines came back and relieved the Army Forces of Al Anbar. That became our focus. The bright flashing problem in the area rapidly became Fallujah and—to a lesser extent but a growing one—Ramadi. I think most people are familiar with the debates at that time and General Mattis and General Conway's reluctance, initially, to make this a conventional fight in Fallujah. There was political pressure to do so after the incident with the Blackwater contractors, and then the operational pause once you had the tactical initiative and the costs that were associated with that.

People are seeing that, but what they don't see when it comes to the rest of Al Anbar is the dynamic that occurred in getting the force density necessary to deal with that problem or more specifically to execute the operational design that Lieutenant General Sanchez and the Ambassador were requiring at the time. What I mean is you had battalions that already had, by any estimation in previous conflicts, inordinately large areas of operation for which they were responsible for providing security. They were already stretched thin, and now you're going to do a conventional clearing operation of a significant urban area [Fallujah]. It required bringing some of those battalions out of those areas and extending other battalions' areas. That was really the situation that 3/25 fell in on as a Marine battalion in Hadithah at the time.

Jones: Well of course at this time, too, there was a lot of discussion about "is this a counterinsurgency?" There wasn't even an agreement at the strategic level exactly how to approach this. [10:27]

Cooling: Yes, Sir. There were oscillations, not because of changes in leadership, but within the existing leadership. I mean they were wrestling at the policy and the strategic levels on how it should be approached. And of course there was some reluctance to admit error to begin with in terms of the force density that was necessary to do stability operations following a major conflict. But in any event, 3/25 got that rather large battlespace that was assigned to them. And the dynamic that was occurring in the Fallujah and Ramadi areas at the time—many of the insurgents were filtering out of those larger urban areas that were the focus of combat power and flowing into Hadithah. Concurrently, the same flow was happening from outside of Iraq. All together, in terms of people who were sponsoring the insurgency externally, Al Qaeda was flowing forces from Syria and other places into Iraq, and of course, the meeting place for both was Hadithah. It's the first place where you really can blend into a large urban area.

You saw this as well with the execution [murder] of the police force in Hadithah in the soccer stadium.⁴ Certain people of course rode the fence, but as soon as you created that semi-vacuum you didn't have the force density to help the local security forces. And part of that police force, included one of their officers named Farouq.⁵ He and a number of the officers that were in that police force fled Hadithah and went north. I don't recall the name of the area, but it was outside of Al Anbar.

Jones: Was it into the 101st Airborne area?

Cooling: It was the 101st Airborne Division's area of operations, significantly north of Hadithah.⁶ Several of them had family connections up there, so they were up there for a good portion of the time until we could get them back. But in any event, that's kind of the dynamic that 3/1 fell in on.

When 3/1 entered the Hadithah Triad areas, their newly assigned area of operations, the Fallujah battle, of course, was over and now the forces were free to be more equitably distributed throughout Al Anbar. So 3/1 really increased the density of forces in Hadithah significantly from what 3/25 was able to do, because 3/1's assigned area of operations was roughly a third of what 3/25's was. When they went in to do that, they recognized that Hadithah was a problem. And as a result, the MNF-West [Multi-National Force] leadership, in conjunction with the operational guidance I assume that they were provided, took a very aggressive, almost Fallujah-like approach to clearing the entire triad. And that was Operation RIVER GATE.

Jones: This was about the time when I MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] turned over to II MEF and we got kind of a change in focus of effort from higher then?

Cooling: Yes, Sir, that's right. And as II MEF came in and turned over with I MEF, 3/1 is one of those initial battalions coming in under that new watch. It became a very aggressive rotational clearing strategy by II MEF. And what I mean is it really began, in fact, with Hadithah and 3/1 in Operation RIVER GATE. Not only 3/1, and its accompanying Iraqi

⁴ According to the article by Andrew Tilghman, "Call for Iraqi Police in Hadithah Goes Unanswered," Stars and Stripes, U.S., 5 June 2006, the Police were beheaded in the soccer stadium in 2004 when the Marines left to support the battle for Fallujah.

⁵ Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah District Chief of Police was interviewed at the Provincial Government Center in Ramadi, 8 April 2010 by Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves USMC.

⁶ Colonel Farouq said that he moved to the Shirqat District of Salah ad Din Province to the northeast of Al Anbar.

Army fledgling battalion, but another two Iraqi battalions as I recall and another US battalion surged into the Hadithah Triad area and did this clearing operation called RIVER GATE. Part of that included dropping the bridges between Hadithah/Haqlaniyah and Barwana, which disrupted local commerce in addition to making just day-to-day life for many of these people on both sides of the river a lot more inconvenient and difficult than it had ever been in the past. That's a very conventional approach to interdicting lines of communication, and quite honestly, I think that was a blatant mistake. I mean, it impeded our ability to respond to security threats more than it impeded our adversary. But in any event, that took place. 3/1 and these other forces cleared the Hadithah Triad house by house. Every house there had a unit marking painted on it that indicated the room and the building they had cleared.

Jones: You mentioned in your telephone interview with Dr. Knarr that they would use the MCLCs [Mine Clearing Line Charge] on the streets.

Cooling: Yes Sir. I'm sure they were right, but they made assumptions in some areas that they were laden with IEDs [improvised explosive devices], so to ensure force protection prior to the clearing of the individual buildings, they detonated MCLCs down some of the major avenues of Hadithah. [17:35]

Jones: And then branded every house as they cleared them?

Cooling: They did. And so that was the kind of operation. And then they settled into a stability set. So, rules of engagement, did they change? No, at the strategic and operational level the standing rules of engagement remained the standing rules of engagement, but the interpretation and the application of those rules of engagement were dramatically different.

And if you look at 3/1's experience, as the judicial and investigative process plays out in the incident,⁷ if you look at their experience as a battalion, they were in Fallujah and then they came back from Fallujah, which is a very conventional interpretation of the rules of engagement. They came back into a training program that largely was reinforcing that type of interpretation of the rules of engagement. They redeployed and immediately did RIVER GATE, which was very much along that same line. Now all of a sudden they're in a stability phase and there was no significant operational pause for them to reset and retrain,

⁷ "The incident" is referring to a 19 November 2005 incident in which 24 Iraqi civilians were killed in the aftermath of a roadside bomb attack on a 3/1 vehicle patrol. For a detailed description of the incident see Tim McGirk, *Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Haditha?* www.time.com, 19 March 2006, www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1174649,00.html.

which is why one of the things that we try to emphasize in our current tactical programs is the ability to train Marines to do an in-stride rules of engagement change. [19:15]

Jones: And all this time, too, the population is getting more and more disenfranchised and more and more anti-America and anti-Marine Corps.

Cooling: Yes Sir. If you're a citizen in Hadithah, seeing the fall of Saddam Hussein and the Sunni control losing power, it is, "What's going to happen to us?" The next thing you see is the demise of the social infrastructure. People are not getting paid. The people who were employed by the Army are now completely disenfranchised, because they are no longer a part of the government. They're unemployed. The water services and utility services are impeded, and no one's there to fix it. Now all of a sudden these external sources are stirring up and reinforcing this anti-American viewpoint, which, of course, you would naturally be anti-American, I think, if you were put in those circumstances. Certainly you would have discounted any idea that the Americans were going to make things better for you.

So, Al Qaeda, the Ba'athists, and others take advantage of that. There's that vacuum, and then, when the Americans pull the security forces out, you either kill or run everybody out of town who was cooperating with American Forces. Now, if you're just the average citizen, who do you want to side with? I mean, the guy who's got the power and who's whacking people or the guy who tells you that they're there to liberate you, but they've left a vacuum on a number of occasions? Then 3/1 comes back in and does Operation RIVER GATE; now your door has been kicked in and you've got a red bull painted on the outside of your door. Now you're reinforcing what your adversary has been advertising and telling them all along.

So that was Hadithah when we arrived to do our relief in place with 3/1. When I'd done the pre-deployment site survey for a week with 3/1 about two and a half months prior to deploying, they had gotten through RIVER GATE and were laying down in the stability set and creating the forward operating bases for the companies outside of the dam.

So when we came in, we organized our task organization similar to theirs to fall in on the company forward operating bases, relieve them in place [RIP] of their respective company areas of operation and the equipment that was being left in theatre, etc. We got into theatre and the RIP was shortened considerably by a decision at the RCT [Regimental Combat Team] or the MEF level not to use [the roads]. [23:21] We arrived in Al Asad, by opera-

tional airlift, and then we had to wait for tactical airlift to be able to take our companies in-
to those forward operating bases and the battalion itself into Hadithah Dam.

Jones: You mentioned in your telephone interview this was an ironic twist, because you're
staying away from the MSRs [Main Supply Routes] that you had to use tactically for the
rest of the time anyway.

Cooling: That's right, Sir, I mean it didn't make any sense.

Jones: I think this is one of the key lessons when you start talking to young guys about some
of the decisions made and whatnot, how decisions can have tactical ramifications. From
a strategic level, we always talk about the tactical things we're doing having strategic
ramifications, but here's one that really kind of backfired I think.

Cooling: Yes Sir. I mean the intent of course was pure. I mean the intent was to keep Marines
in large numbers off the MSRs, because they were vulnerable to IED attack.

Jones: How much did it truncate your RIP, do you think? You lost about two or three days of
the RIP? [24:32]

Cooling: We lost half our RIP as a result of that. Ironically, Lieutenant Colonel Chessani and
his jump command post⁸ came forward and got my command group on the roads, but the
company movements were limited to heli-borne operations. And then of course during the
RIP, what little RIP was left, and the rest of the operation, we were routinely on the
same routes that we were prohibited from trafficking in order to get there for the RIP.

Jones: You also mentioned in your telephone interview that by the time you arrived, your area
of operation [AO] had expanded. It caused you to even send one of your companies, I
think you gave your Weapons Company, down to Baghdadi

Cooling: We did the RIP, in the configuration, in the same AO that was assigned to 3/1. How-
ever, the RCT had made the determination before that, to expand our AO shortly after
our arrival. We weren't aware of that at the time, but that discussion began while the RIP
was taking place.

Lieutenant Colonel Chessani was adamant, in talking to the RCT, that was not in his esti-
mation the right thing to do. The reason was because he sensed and experienced over the
last several months an increase of attacks on his forces while he was there. He thought that

⁸ A jump command post is a term for a mobile command post.

the time to decrease density in the Hadithah Triad was not then. Nonetheless, the RCT made the decision that they had to, because there were large spaces of terrain that were unassigned altogether. They were kind of in the MEF reserve area, which translated in our terminology to insurgent safe haven.

So our battlespace extended up beyond Albu Hyatt, Baghdadi, which was adjacent and across the street, quite literally, from Al Asad if you will, then further towards Baghdad all the way up into the Dulab area. So our battlespace increased, as I recall, about 40 percent beyond what it was. To do that, of course, we had to completely re-task organize, which considerably reduced the value of our PTP [Pre-Deployment Training Program]. What I mean by that is we had to structure an additional line company out of Weapons Company as opposed to keeping them in Mobile Assault Platoon configuration, as 3/1 had them, and as we had planned to employ them.

So, we reduced the strength of the company that was assigned to Barwanah. We reduced the Mobile Assault Platoons available. We basically converted Weapons Company, and of course we reduced the battalion staff and H&S company pretty considerably to create what amounted to a 4th line company. Now we did benefit from our previous deployment to Afghanistan where we actually operated in a very similar construct. There were several people who stayed in the battalion, of course, at all levels and that, I think, made that transition easier than it otherwise would have been.

Jones: How many company commanders did you have in Iraq that were company commanders in Afghanistan?

Cooling: One. Our Lima Company Commander in Afghanistan was our Weapons Company Commander in Iraq. Additionally, one of my company commanders became the battalion 3, the other company commanders in Afghanistan had PCS'd [Permanent Change of Station].

Jones: It would appear that the Weapons Company's change, modification, orientation, if you will, was probably the most problematic, so this was a guy that had been a company commander before?

Cooling: That's right, Sir, and that was one of the reasons why the Weapons Company [did well] and why we chose the Weapons Company to be the core for that and take the risk in the Mobile Assault Platoons, as opposed to H&S Company.

Jones: You mentioned also in your telephone interview that while trying to reconfigure the actual FOB [Forward Operating Base] for Weapons Company, you had an interesting dynamic where you were trying to get engineer support, which I gather was being used primarily to build a gym in Al Asad?

Cooling: During the whole Baghdadi thing, and the increase in battlespace in addition to causing the turmoil associated with reconfiguring the TO [Table of Organization], we were literally on our own with our attached platoon of combat engineers. It's certainly a capable organization, but not one that's going to rapidly build a forward operating base for a company where none of this is developed.

So my frustration was, first of all, I'm taking battlespace that's immediately adjacent to one of the largest posts in Iraq -- Al Asad. I think all guys that are at the lower tactical levels have a common view of that, but it's reality. I mean, two huge KBR [Kellogg, Brown & Root] chow halls, all these cats and dogs, people playing, lifting weights and playing basketball, yet none of them can move outside the gate across the street to Baghdadi to provide support to the police force there. The reason why Baghdadi became important is because of a guy named Colonel Shaban. Colonel Shaban was a very charismatic inspirational leader. He had been an Iraqi Army Warrant Officer. He basically took over the police force in Baghdadi in cooperation with US Forces. The Iraqi Government made it painful to recognize him as an official police force. Yet when no other Iraqis in the area were actively supporting US Forces and policies, he was. And he was a target. They made several attempts on his life. He's been wounded in attacks even after we left Iraq. His brother was brutally killed. When his brother was killed he went to the RCT headquarters at Al Asad with his brother in the trunk and showed the RCT Commander. He said, "All I want from you is ammunition." That had a personal effect on Colonel Crowe. It brought it to his attention that they needed support. Our frustration was that there were so many forces on Al Asad. You know, if every Marine is a rifleman, we could have used some of those riflemen on the other side of the street. I'm not talking about the Regimental Headquarters. They were very expeditionary as well. I'm talking about the multiple tenant organizations on Al Asad.

All that said, the engineer thing that was most frustrating is that I could not get [33:30] any heavy engineers to come help create a viable forward operating base for a US company minus that we're collocating with an Iraqi Police Force that's not yet technically recognized. We were occupying an abandoned housing area, which was an Iraqi Army

housing area. Both the Iraqi Police and us were a short distance from one another in this housing complex.

The RCT fought for us up higher to try and free some heavy engineers to come do this. In frustration, I went to Al Asad and went to the Marine Wing Support Squadron and asked them what they were doing. They told me that they were building a gym for the pilots of the group. And I asked, "Do you think in between that heavy lifting that you're doing you might be able to put some of those things [Jersey barriers] on a lowboy and move them across the highway there and help me with a FOB?" The MWSS [Marine Wing Support Squadron] commander was certainly supportive, and the MWSG [Marine Wing Support Group] commander was very supportive. They went up their chain of command and they made that happen.

But it was just the fact that that's the way we had to get that done. We got guys out on OPs [Observation Posts] etc., filling sandbags for their force protection and yet on Al Asad you've got these huge Texas barriers coming in to create a traffic circle around the flag pole, quite literally. And Marines saw that every time they visited Al Asad, which was a short distance for Weapons Company. I mean, moving literally from Weapons Company's FOB onto the base Al Asad was a 20 minute movement max. The Regimental Headquarters was closer to them in proximity than my headquarters was, so it made more sense to logistically resupply them at Al Asad rather than bring the supplies from Al Asad to the dam and then bring it from the dam to them. We just brought it from Al Asad directly to them. [25:47]

Jones: What was the distance from the dam to Al Asad?

Cooling: From the dam to Al Asad, in terms of driving distance it was about a two hours and fifteen minutes, roughly. Two hours to Weapons Company and then beyond Weapons Company in Baghdadi another hour to hour and a half to get to Dulab, which is where our attached Amtrak Company minus was. They, too, were performing as a Provisional Infantry Company.

Jones: You mentioned on your tape as well the difficulty in the police force you were working with getting paid at this particular time. And you actually helped out with a few folks, actually, helping out with pay.

Cooling: We did. In fact Marines were taking money out of their own pockets to pay the Iraqi Police under Colonel Shaban, because we could not get them properly trained and recognized. We went through a number of iterations at the political and strategic levels with

the new Shia government. That was all part of them trying to marginalize Sunni influence, so as they were going through those growing machinations with their fledgling government, that police force was not paid officially by the Iraqi Government and recognized until about a month prior to our departure.

Jones: So, obviously Shaban must have a very inspirational effect on keeping his force together.

Cooling: Yes he did. Again, he is a very charismatic guy; also like many of our own leaders, he was very extraverted and self promoting at times. He refers to himself as the “Lion of Al Anbar.” All the US Commanders who served in the area, you know, we all talked to one another, “Wonder how the Lion’s doing now a days?”

Jones: What is the Lion doing today, do you know?

Cooling: I believe he is still the police chief in Baghdadi and doing, from what I understand, very well.

Jones: I guess Dr. Knarr’s going to see him over there.⁹

Cooling: I hope so. And I do think he has more of a regional influence in the Iraqi Police than he did at our time. So I think that is progressing as we would want it to. When we got there, the mission under 3/1 was really kind of a clear; the hold and build part had not yet evolved. And they tried to go into “hold,” which was laying the forward operating bases down and starting to operate from them. During the early hold portion is when the incident occurred for 3/1 in Hadithah. And the subsequent press reports, etcetera, inflamed that scenario. So, initially, 3/3 was not slated to go to Hadithah. We were going to RCT-5. Our initial AO was supposed to be Ramadi, but sometime in this process just about 60–70 days prior to us deploying, right before the PDSS, it was decided that we were going to go into Hadithah. It was a little bit before that. And then the incident happened, as I recall shortly thereafter. [40:15]

But 3/1 started in that hold phase. They picked pretty good company forward operating bases and began their security patrols. They started identifying who was the mayor and who were the local officials. They attempted to meet with them. There was a lot of, “Oh, we can’t meet with Americans, we’ll be killed.” Later this mayor turned out to be one of

⁹ Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi, former Chief of Police in Baghdadi, was interviewed at the Provincial Government Center in Ramadi, 8 April 2010 by Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC.

the guys actively participating in the insurgency; but it took us about four-and-a-half-to-five months into our deployment before it became clear that he was an active part of the insurgency. Then he fled the area; reinstituting a town council was problematic.

Jones: So when he fled did the town council kind of dissolve?

Cooling: The town council really dissolved before we even got there. I mean it initially met with 3/1 and then they pretty much told Lieutenant Colonel Chessani that they weren't going to cooperate with him, with the exception of the mayor and a couple others who, again, clearly did it as more of a façade than anything else. And you saw that manifested in them looking for things to play upon.

As an example, we had a young teenage girl who was beat up by her father. She ran up to the FOB, and she was given a "Halt," the whole escalation of force procedure. They took her down and brought her in. The interpreters found out that she'd been beaten, and it was clear that she had been beaten. She requested asylum and that became a huge tribal issue for us. She was accepted into the CMOC [Civil Military Operations Center], which we had just stood up. They weren't TACON [Tactical Control] or OPCON [Operational Control] to us, but we worked with them.

I give this as an example, because this is one of the incidents that the mayor would then say, "US Forces abducted her." "No, we didn't abduct her. We are willing to meet with anybody. We are willing to meet with the parents." Then it became a very contentious issue in whether she was going to be released back to her family. She didn't want to be released, and culturally we were told, because she spent the night at the CMOC, that if she was released that they going to kill her, her own family. So, she was taken out of the area and sent to an orphanage. She was 17 years old.

It was one of countless times that the mayor's whole approach was never to do anything other than cultivate sensitive issues between the population and US Forces.

Jones: So once you broke the code on the mayor, he left and did they establish a new mayor before you left country?

Cooling: No. That dynamic was not yet capable of taking place. When we got to Hadithah, we conducted the RIP, and we fell in on these FOBs. We were technically, in the early stages of what later would become the hold phase of clear, hold, build—even though we'd cleared, abandoned, cleared, abandoned, cleared, held, and built; that is really kind of how it transpired in the larger scheme of things.

Jones: There were really two periods where the Marines left. 1/8 was there at one time and they left during the second Fallujah, didn't they? [45:30]

Cooling: Yes, Sir. And then as we were there, falling in on the hold phase and trying to [figure out] the leadership and meet with them. Another key civilian leader was the engineer at the dam itself. I can't recall his name offhand. You could see his residence from the dam, but he's still there as well.

He was your penultimate fence rider. One, he's a very educated guy. He's a Soviet-educated engineer. He had also spent some time in Europe. He was a renaissance man by most definitions, meaning he ran the Hadithah hydroelectric dam during the course of the day, and in the evening you would see him out planting crops in the Washingtonian sense behind his house adjacent to the Euphrates River. His hands were always mangled and dirt laden. He would go from that to a suit and work astronomical hours. We would have discussions on Islam and Christianity. At one point in time, he told me that the reason that America is a declining power is because we're allowing our women too much influence in social leadership and government.

We would have discussions where I would ask, "Don't you guys recognize the Old Testament as a valid document for Islam? I mean it has religious context." And then I would ask, "What about the books of Esther and Ruth?" Apparently those books are taken out! But, in any event, those are the kind of discourses we had. I suspect he kept an active communications with me and with the insurgents. Both of us recognized his importance, because there were large periods of time when there was nobody else that knew how to run the dam.

We enjoyed an Azerbaijani company that provided security for the dam, and they were restricted by their national rule set to doing just that. They couldn't perform offensive or external patrolling operations, which was fine with me. They were a conscript force and a good disciplined force. They knew their weapon systems. We had to augment them with things like night vision capability, but they were the ideal force to do guard duty at the dam. They had a very boot camp, rigid discipline-type system, which was ideally suited for that task. And it freed my H&S Company from guard duty to go out into the northwestern villages, northwest of the pool above the dam and influence some of those areas as well as Dam Village, which was right outside the village.

Jones: During this time were you and the other adjacent battalions getting heavily involved in what they were beginning to call stability operations?

Cooling: When we got there, it was all stability operations. Immediately following the incident, because of the level of public attention and scrutiny to the ongoing investigations into the incident, our interpretation of the rules of engagement were exceptionally strict. This required the Marines of 3/3 to demand at all leadership levels what others would consider a considerable amount of personal risk.

Jones: We talked before about the shift from I MEF to II MEF, now we're shifting from II MEF back to I MEF and Zilmer is the MEF Commander? [50:55]

Cooling: That's correct Sir. I'm not sure how much personalities played into it as opposed to changes in leadership at the strategic level and policy guidance. What I mean is, I'm not sure if they coincided exactly or if it was just coincidence. When I MEF came in and there was a change in leadership, clear, hold, build was the approach from General Casey, some of which was formed in his visit with guys like Dale Alford [Commander, 3/6] out in Al Qaim. Dale was an anomaly in the way he approached things. Ironically, his approach was more consistent with the Marine Corps writ large, our historical approach to fighting counterinsurgency. But that was novel to General Casey and to others. His conversation was one of the things that contributed to General Casey standing up the COIN Academy and including 3/6's approach as a model. That was good in some ways, and in other ways it was counterproductive. You can't lay down a template on every place in Iraq. The commander has to have flexibility to determine the distribution of forces based on things such as, is it a more rural environment or more urban environment? Everybody wants to look for that checklist, but there's no checklist for that type of thing. You've got to find a balance based on the dynamics at hand.

Jones: General Allen made an interesting comment when we talked with him a couple weeks ago. There's always this question of a tipping point, but he said there's no such thing as a tipping point in his mind; it's a period. But I would think we're starting into the tipping period where things and people are starting to shift, and there are many different reasons why the shift. Dale Alford in Al Qaim was probably integral to that. A lot of these things are coming together at this particular time, well before the counterinsurgency manual comes out. It's evolving.

Cooling: Yes Sir. And it changed into a legitimate counterinsurgency approach of clear, hold, build and maintaining presence as opposed to clear, abandon, clear, abandon, clear, abandon. Still dealing with the force density issues to some degree (although forces had started increasing in quote unquote the Surge, which was a later dynamic) as you pro-

gressed into that period, I agree, General Allen is right in saying that there's not necessarily a distinct event that makes it happen. We had to make a payment, meaning we lost. We gave up. We didn't provide security. We didn't have adequate force density. We allowed foreigners to come in and exploit the situation. We set those dynamics in motion, and it's not just something that changes back and you regain that opportunity overnight. That was an opportunity lost. Things were not going well. We changed the philosophy to counterinsurgency. Later we added forces to make it more substantive, and to legitimately partner.

But while you're doing that, you're paying. Because how does the individual Marine defend himself? He's got to accept risk. He's got to make an assumption that this Iraqi who's driving at my post is not a threat, and I'm going to go through very detailed, long and extensive escalation of force procedures. Every time he gets that wrong or even when he gets it right, there's an investigation that follows and he knows it! I mean that's a hell of a thing to ask an 18- or 19-year-old man to do or a man of any age for that matter. That's what we had to ask them to do with a very moderate level of force density at best. Also, there were dynamics that were set in place where our adversary, when we got there, had a lot of support from the indigenous population, because they'd learned the hard way in their minds. So, with that change of philosophy, between General Casey's evolution into clear, hold, build and II MEF to I MEF devolved to where 3/3 and battalions on the ground had two principal missions. They both revolve around security forces. One, they needed to evolve and grow these Iraqi Army battalions that they were partnered with. And two, they needed to recruit and stand up local security forces, specifically the Iraqi Police.

So, when we got there, there was an Iraqi Army battalion, 2/27 that was with Lieutenant Colonel Chessani in 3/1. [56:45] They'd just gotten there. I think they'd been there three months or so. It was commanded by Colonel Abbas. He was also a very effective leader. He physically looked like a walrus. He had a big huge fu manchu mustache. He was a big, rotund man, but he was a reliable guy and a brave guy with an evolving force. These guys weren't from Hadithah, so they bussed back and forth on leave to home.

Jones: Were most of them Sunni or a lot of them Shia?

Cooling: No, many of them were Shia. They frequently had a hard time getting paid, because of, again, government corruption and the fledgling government's inefficiency. Naturally between those two things, they had long periods where they would have to go without a

check. Colonel Abbas would have to go to Baghdad himself and plead. That type of dynamic was going on for them as well.

Jones: What was his background? He'd been previously in the Army?

Cooling: Colonel Abbas was one of the, as I recall, Shia officers that was serving in the Iraqi Army, so you know a lower level officer in the original army and now he is a colonel. He had been a lieutenant colonel and since then promoted to colonel.

Jones: So on your watch you saw him grow and watched that capability grown?

Cooling: When we got there, the Iraqi Army Soldiers were being employed as additional personnel in US patrols, meaning there'd be three or four Iraqis that were taken out with Chessani's squad patrols. By the time we left seven months later, they had conducted two battalion-sized operations of their own, meaning, "We're going in here. We're going to distribute humanitarian assistance supplies. We're going to go door to door to take a census." They did all of those things in counterinsurgency and included some small scale conventional attacks in response to being attacked. One of those attacks was the first brigade level operation. That second battalion operation they did was the first independent, Iraqi, brigade level, supervised operation. It was only one battalion, but it brought the brigade in as a higher headquarters to participate. [1:00:23]

Jones: Do you attribute this to his personality and his leadership skills and whatnot?

Cooling: I do. He was very much an independent minded guy and because of that, he had initiative. He wanted to learn from us. He didn't want us to tell him what and how to do things. He knew his country better than we did, and we agreed with all of that right off the bat. He recognized the limitations of the training of his soldiers and his staff. The ETT [Embedded Training Team] did a fine job of getting the staff up to speed and being able to plan and conduct operations.

Jones: Did you see improvement over the time you were there on how the Iraqi Government took care of these folks?

Cooling: No, not while I was there.

Jones: Were they struggling with the same payment and resource issues when you left as they were when you got there?

Cooling: They made some progress, but it was very moderate. They got paid more frequently, but it was still not on time. They got paid a larger portion of the pay they were supposed to receive, but not all of it. So that was kind of the dynamics that we saw.

On the other side, on the police force side, we started doing what every other AO was doing and that was setting up recruiting drives for policemen. We had three of them. One of them was a centralized recruiting effort in Hadithah itself. The next two we did in multiple locations. We recruited in Haqlaniyah, Barwana, and Baghdadi. Baghdadi actually had some people show up and join Colonel Shaban's force. And as we continued to get Colonel Shaban's guys to the police academy, formally trained, and then recognized and paid, we began to have success recruiting in Baghdadi. But, it was a completely different dynamic throughout the triad. No one would show up to these recruiting drives, no one.

Jones: This is kind of tied back to the beheadings at the soccer stadium and all that right?

Cooling: It was. We weren't coming to their homes in the middle of the night and killing them. But our adversary was if they cooperated with the US Forces, so there was no co-operation. And we had no robust intelligence database from which to draw on. I mean there was not a clear picture of who was cooperating with whom.

Jones: So this particular timeframe, this is well before we really got into the company level intel cells [CLIC], the BATS [Biometric Automated Toolset System] and the HIIDE [Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment]?

Cooling: All of that was coming online. I mean, we didn't call it a CLIC with CLOC [Company Level Operations Center] or CLOC with CLIC, but that's what we were doing. I mean, we had done that in Afghanistan out of necessity, because our AO in Afghanistan was astronomical!

Jones: The technology still wasn't realized yet?

Cooling: No, the technologies weren't there yet. BATS was just starting to filter down and integrated and we received BATS, but we didn't have a BATS database turned over to us from 3/1.

Now, 3/1 had a good precursor. In fact, RCT-2 had used 3/1's intel database as a model for the entire RCT and was selling it as the model to follow within II MEF. The problem was getting the informants to provide information. [1:05:27]

Lieutenant Colonel Chessani's intelligence officer had laid out a good database system. They turned that system over to us, but the data wasn't yet really populated in it. It was only just beginning. Through our seven months, we continued to feed into that. Increasingly, we were able to establish more sources, but the flood of that information didn't happen until the last two months of our deployment. Between the second and third of these conventional recruiting drives to get police, we talked to the ODA [Operational Detachment Alpha]. We got all the background on these police guys that had fled from Hadithah that were from Hadithah, and where they were.

I sent Lieutenant Vick Lance, who was our S4 Alpha. He was a true young MAGTF [Marine Air Ground Task Force] officer. He's a guy that you could put in any MOS [Military Occupation Specialty] and he'd excel. I told Lieutenant Lance, "Look, here's where these guys are. Get to Al Asad, and find a way to get from Al Asad up into the 101st Airborne Division's area. Get with their THTs [Tactical Humint Team], and find Colonel Farouq." And he did. He identified that Colonel Farouq was still there. Colonel Farouq said that he could get 200 police officers, a core of which was from Hadithah, to join him and return to Hadithah.

Jones: And did he?

Cooling: Well, then we had to go through an internal battle of working through the RCT to the MEF and up to the CJTF [Combined Joint Task Force] in order to make that happen. So, we arranged a recruiting drive up there. We took all the processing up there. This force of 200 didn't show up at all the first day of the drive. So, now everybody is panicking at all levels, it didn't seem to pan out. However, the second day about 200 showed up. Due to the new Iraqi Government's police standards, they rapidly attrited down to about 80.

Jones: Was Colonel Farouq now on campus himself? Did he show up?

Cooling: Yes Sir. He and officers in the Iraqi Police Force. And Colonel Farouq was a policeman before, not an Iraqi Army member.

Jones: Colonel Farouq is good people, too, right?

Cooling: Well, he was good for us. And he's still a policeman. As I understand it, he still runs a very viable force over there in Hadithah.

What caused me pause in answering your question is that retribution was definitely on his agenda. I mean, you can understand why when portions of your family and your colleagues in the police force are assassinated.

But when you're doing counterinsurgency, having him come back in the area and target those guys who were from the outside, who are sponsoring this, or the Ba'athists that are still hardcore and are sponsoring this, and taking action against them, that's great. But there's a legal system now associated with that. In our mind it's no longer a conventional fight; but in his mind it is. He was thinking, "I'm coming back with my force, and with your help, I'm going to go from door to door and kill all these people who need killing!" In addition to that being his modus operandi, his definition of who needed killing was extensive. It was not only the sponsor, but the guy who cooperated with him. I mean it's a civil war for all intents and purposes on a micro scale. So we had to deal with that.

While we were there, we kept a tight rein on him. Increasingly later, 2/3 and 1/3 continued to try and develop him. There were a couple times when they allowed him additional freedom, and he took advantage of it by reverting to the old way, which of course greatly complicates [things]. So, if you asked Stretch Donnellan [Commander, 2/3], he thinks highly of Farouq. He understands that dynamic. By the time Chip Bierman [Commander, 1/3] got in, Chip would kind of say he didn't care much for Colonel Farouq. He felt that he couldn't be trusted and that he continuously had to keep reins on him. Again, we did not allow him to do that, and we worked to change that mentality, but you've got to have a certain amount of appreciation or empathy for why he feels that way. [1:11:50]

In any event, we went through that, and then we couldn't get them into the Police Academy. Then we had a second recruiting drive, and it took four months of pain to get that force identified. They sent the force to Baghdad for training. We transported them there. They showed up to Baghdad, and after the transportation had left, they told all of Colonel Farouq's policemen that the course had been cancelled or that there was no more capacity in the course for them. And they let them go in Baghdad. Colonel Farouq was furious as you might imagine. I mean, "How incompetent are you guys in this Iraqi Government? I mean, you tell me to get these guys here. We get them here, and then they're turned away? Everybody knows when they're standing outside of a recruiting station in Hadithah [1:12:47], that they're cooperating with US Forces, and now you're just letting them go on their own? They've got nowhere to go. They've got to find their way back home." So we dealt with that problem and put salve on that wound.

Jones: Were some of these guys themselves killed because of this?

Cooling: At that time, not to my knowledge. Then we finally got them screened and vetted.

Their officers were deemed qualified by the Iraqi Government somehow, but their troops still had to go to the academy. The second time they sent them off, they got on aircraft and they took them. Colonel Farouq and his officers came to Hadithah. This was in the last couple months that we were there.

Now all of the strategic level intelligence that we have visibility on starts indicating that Al Qaeda in Iraq recognizes that this force has got to be destroyed. Mentioning Farouq by name, so they're targeted. You start seeing the force flow that they direct into Hadithah to deal with it. Specifically, snipers and mortar-men. If we do anything in terms of our tactics, techniques, and procedures that would benefit our training and education programs, we ought to find out how they trained mortar-men to do what they do, because they're better than any US mortar-man I've ever seen.

Jones: These were Al Qaeda?

Cooling: These were Al Qaeda trained and sponsored. Whether the gunner was actually an Iraqi or Syrian or where they were from, I'm not quite certain. But these are guys that can take a 120mm mortar without a bi-pod from a base plate, and put three rounds on the roof of the center building in your forward operating base, tear it down, and depart the area in a time limit of well under five minutes...from multiple positions. That's damn good. So, they were not amateurs. Up to that time, we'd had several suicide bombers. We'd had of course multiple IEDs, but we had not had sophisticated snipers and these gifted mortar-men until that time. And it coincided directly with the higher level intelligence about them surging into the area to eliminate Farouq's force.

Jones: Their main mission was just that! It was to cut down those forces growing; it was threat to them if Farouq's force grew. [1:15:52]

Cooling: That's correct, Sir. What we did with Colonel Farouq's police officers, his leadership, is, instead of coupling them with just us or the Iraqi Army, we brought in Colonel Shaban and some of his policemen from Baghdadi and augmented Colonel Farouq's force with some of the Baghdadi policemen. All of them were Sunni, the leadership from Farouq's force from Hadithah. So these are their relatives, their fellow tribe members. They know who's doing what to whom and how. We saw a couple of the Sheikhs leave the area altogether. All of that dynamic had finally materialized when it was time to RIP with 2/3.

So with the mortar-men and the snipers and Farouq's officers there, all of that while we did our RIP, Colonel Farouq sent a portion of his officers home back to where they had come from in the 101st Division's area on leave to bring some of their family members back. Some of them wanted to get their families and bring them back to Hadithah. Maybe three or four days after TOA, those officers were murdered on the way back.¹⁰ So a portion of the forces leadership attrited there. I had to go to Colonel Farouq three or four weeks before TOA, and ask him where his policemen were training. Because I was told by the RCT, who was told by the MEF, that we lost these guys again. Somebody turned them away. They're not in training. They're not where they're supposed to be. And he told me, "They're in Jordan going through the training!" I said, "Look, I know that this is embarrassing for me to ask you, but are you sure?" He said, "Yeah, I'm talking to them on the cell phone." I mean that's how goat roped we were in our tie-in with the Iraqi Government and this police training process. I mean there was no viable oversight over that process.

Jones: But it appears, though, by the time that you turned over to Stretch, you had at least a good rapport with Farouq, and you were starting to build. You had a good rapport with the battalion, 2/27, you were starting to build. So the two components of that mission that you were laden with were starting to fall in place.

Cooling: Yes Sir. I think when you talk to Stretch, he'll emphasize that. When he came out on the PDSS, we were going through all the frustrations with the multiple layers of higher headquarters to field that force. He watched from his PDSS forward to when we actually did TOA, he knew daily what was going on with that force, where it was, how they lost it, and all of the other dynamics. He also knew that they [the insurgents] were pouring in these new guys to deal with it. So, the thing that's frustrating for me is 2/3 came in a very hot period. We did a RIP. You know how we talk about how they [insurgents] anticipate your turn over time. And they target or saturate forces to exploit that. The problem was, I never saw any intelligence that indicated that that was the plan. It was all related to Farouq's force, and it coincided by chance with the RIP.

So, our last few months and Stretch's first several months were brutal. Not to mention some things that made it a painful deployment for those guys that were not related to the

¹⁰ On 24 September 2006, Colonel Farouq's brother and another policeman were kidnapped and beheaded on their way from Bayji to Hadithah. Pamela Hess, *Iraqi heroes pay a high price*, 15 March 2007. Accessed at <http://www.leatherneck.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-43427.html>, on 14 April 2011.

adversary; [as an example] the helicopter crash that they had off Hadithah. They had some really tough circumstances to deal with.

What we did during our seven months there that I think every 3/3 Marine ought to be proud of is 2/27 was the best battalion in the 7th Division. It was recognized at multiple layers. If you spoke with Colonel Crowe, I'm certain he would tell you that as would General Zilmer. We pressed them to go beyond the minimum standard to the point where we had them doing brigade operations. And the fielding of Colonel Farouq's police force, which changed the dynamic. He knew who all the bad guys were. He knew who was cooperating with what, so how do you throttle back on his desire for retribution and balance that with now having legitimate multiple sources of intelligence in terms of his guys being there back in the community. Colonel Shaban's force became legitimized, funded, and recognized. And it grew two to three times their original size.

Jones: Obviously this is off your watch, but I remember Stretch talking about a lot of the things he did that facilitated the berming of the area and trying to cut down traffic into and out of the areas, which gave him a better handle on how to handle people like the mortar-men. How long did it take Stretch to get a handle on this threat to Farouq? Did it stabilize on Stretch's watch or was it still on Chip Bierman's watch where Farouq's folks were still being targeted?

Cooling: Oh, I think it stabilized towards the end of Stretch's watch. There were two things that the RCT helped Stretch with. One, they reduced the size of the AO considerably, and two, they bermed the area which is something that we had requested through the course of our deployment. As you know, berming a city that size, that's a lot of engineer work that's got to go into that.

So, those two things contributed and helped Stretch. He continued to cultivate, protect, and grow that police force, because they reached a dynamic where now they could recruit internally. [1:23:25] Now you know there's a force that actually can do something about the guy that's going to try to come in at night and kill them.

Jones: So now it's really working. Now you're really starting to get the population behind you.

Cooling: Yes Sir. I think that problem largely was resolved during 2/3's watch.

Jones: Albeit Farouq still had his penchant for exacting retribution.

Cooling: Yes he did. That's why arguably I would think Chip's perspective is different on Farouq, because that was a primary frustration for him. He didn't experience the first

parts of having no one who could provide any viable intelligence on who was doing what in that area until Farouq. So he was rightfully focusing on professionalizing that police force to an extent that had not yet occurred.

Jones: When you passed the baton off to Stretch, did you feel that 3/3 had developed this fairly savvy level of expertise in company level intel? Regardless of what the monikers we ascribed to—CLIC, CLOC, BATS, HIIDE, whatever—did you feel like now we were starting to break the code in this? And with the police force and the battalion growing, it was obviously going to give us more insight into the community. Were all those things kind of coming together?

Cooling: They were. I mean we knew who the good sheikhs and the bad sheikhs were just simply by who stayed and who left when Colonel Farouq came back in town. I mean, we knew the mayor was bad because he took off when we brought Colonel Farouq in. [I recall] It was during Colonel Farouq's first visit. Before he even brought his officers in, I brought him in to have a meeting specifically with the mayor. Colonel Farouq pretty much told him in the meeting, "Look, you've done this, this, this and this. You have to be cooperating with them. There's no way you're not!" We couldn't just arrest the mayor then based on that conversation, but as soon as we left, the mayor was gone. I made it very clear "Colonel Farouq and his forces are coming back Mr. Mayor, to help you out!"

Jones: He helped him out of town! This is good! I know you mentioned when we first talked to you about this that you didn't know how much you played in the Awakening, but it's obvious that your time was very integral to this whole evolution. It's all kind of a cumulative process. I think your comments were very germane [as an example] that you have to pay a price to get to the point where you could do certain things. That price was being paid by 3/25, 3/1, and 3/3, and a lot of things contributed to it. These are all points that are so important to capture for the young guys that are coming up and learning how to piece this together. We're going to have counterinsurgency on our lap for quite some time in the Corps and the Army. We talk all the time about the integration of the strategic, operational, and tactical, but, boy, they tell you in a COIN environment you see how the one bad decision can really trickle down and have so many ramifications.

I think we've covered it very, very well. Anything else you would add that would resonate in the whole issue of the Awakening from what we haven't talked about?

Cooling: You asked one question that I'm not sure I answered. You asked about the development of the CLOC with the CLIC and some of the tactical-level things and evolutions. Both in Afghanistan, and ironically, somewhat to a lesser degree in Iraq, the type of conflict and the size of the area of operations that we're prosecuting that conflict over has required us to push stuff down to levels where platoons literally do things that battalions formerly used to do and companies do things that regiments used to do.

I think 3/3, in terms of their evolution in Iraq of those tactical concepts of CLOC with CLIC and how every Marine's a collector, for us more so potentially than other battalions with the exception of 3/6, who had a similar experience in Afghanistan, it was a continuation of what we already knew. Some things we were very frustrated with. I never talked to Dale about this, but the Marine Air Wing and the ACE [Aviation Combat Element] during that time period that we were in Iraq was a logistics ring route force. It did nothing to assist tactically with the prosecution of stability operations, and it could have. In Afghanistan, we made that happen. The Army aviators didn't understand. They don't really understand culturally the concept of the MAGTF [Marine Air Ground Task Force], but you can make that dynamic happen if you have the aircraft and the willingness of those commanders to participate and accept some level of risk.

Jones: Especially when you have the capabilities of the aircraft that they do and the willingness to put themselves in harm's way.

Cooling: Yes, Sir. And the junction with the turnover of all of our airframes, relatively occurring at the same time, especially with regards to our principal Assault Support Aircraft. The limitations of those, particularly in Afghanistan with regard to altitude, etc., made it complicated, but Iraq was not evolved to the extent that Afghanistan was when we left it in many ways. For example, no one had heard of JLENs [Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor] on the Marine side until we asked if we could get one in Iraq. You know, we had a JLENs in Afghanistan. We got one in Iraq by the time that we'd left, about two months prior to the end of the deployment. We got a JLENs for Hadithah. You know, now there is G-BOSS [Ground-Based Operational Surveillance System] and the subsequent evolutions of those types of devices, and no one in Iraq really knew those things existed. Our Afghanistan experience helped a whole hell of a lot in at least driving people to think about it and start bringing some of those things in. [1:31:01]

Jones: Well, one of the ironic breaks, it's almost amazing the Marine Corps did it, is the fact that you had three battalions in Iraq [that] were the same three battalions that turned over

to each other in Afghanistan. In the Marine Corps, we don't generally do things like that, because it looks like it's almost a plan, you know. But that helped, too. It's got to be when you are all in the same regiment.

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Subject: Interview with Colonel James “Stretch” Donnellan, USMC, former Commander, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines in Hadithah

Col James “Stretch” Donnellan, then-LtCol Donnellan, commanded the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (2/3) from September 2006 to April 2007 in the Hadithah Triad area of Al Anbar, Iraq. During his deployment, 2/3 was responsible for developing an effective Iraqi police force, instated a mayor, and initiated an aggressive population control program which included constructing a berm around the Hadithah Triad. It was during this time that the population began to overwhelmingly support the Coalition.



**Col James Donnellan,
former Commander, 2/3 Marines**

Col Donnellan was interviewed on 16 March 2010 at CENTCOM, Tampa, Florida by Dr. William (Bill)

Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, and Major General Tom Jones, USMC, Retired. The following is his account of events during that period.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Please provide background information such as pre-deployment training, the Pre-deployment Site Survey (PDSS), please describe the conditions when you got there, and then provide the sequence of events after you arrived.

Colonel James Donnellan: We relieved 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3), commanded by then-LtCol Norm Cooling, in the Hadithah Triad, Iraq in September 2006. We had also worked with 3/3 and RIP'd [Relief In Place] with them in Afghanistan. After returning from that deployment we did a seven-month pre-deployment work up for Iraq. We had very good communication with Colonel Cooling and his folks during that time, so they kept building our SA [situational awareness] on Hadithah as best as they could while staying focused on their mission.

I thought the pre-deployment training was solid. We had some opportunities to go to the big island in Hawaii. The Regimental Commander, Colonel [Boyer] put in a lot of effort with the Army support folks on the big island to try to modify their standard ranges and training areas to lend themselves more to what we would encounter in Iraq. We did a convoy live fire where the Marines had the ability to dismount to some degree, and roll right into a pursuing trigger-man kind of scenario. The big island is mostly lava rock so it doesn't lend itself to a lot of maneuver, but as best as we could we did that. [01:44]

Then of course, I thought Mojave Viper was very solid. Our impression from our experiences in Afghanistan, and what we heard from Colonel Cooling and his folks, was that Mojave Viper was still leaning a little too heavy on building the combined arms packages at the company level. In particular, for a unit that knew exactly what real estate it was going to in theatre, and knew generally that it was facing a COIN mission, that it was still a little too heavy on combined arms packages. This was done, at perhaps the expense of some time that could have been spent in the BOX with that incredible facility they had out there with the interpreters and the Iraqi Nationals and that kind of stuff. As we left Mojave Viper our feedback was maybe shift the balance 70%-30% of total time towards the time in the BOX versus, the combined arms package. I don't know to what degree it's evolved over time, but I think, with the Combat Hunter Program and some of the things the Marine Corps has adopted fully, it has shifted since then and the pendulum is probably about right.

One of things that was somewhat surprising was that during the PDSS, Colonel Cooling had just identified Colonel Farouq as a potential police chief, but he had to physically go get him. He had to go recover him from northern Iraq and the coordination that I saw him and his staff going through to try to make that happen was a real eye opener on just how isolated each of those battalion maneuver areas were. You did not travel outside your AO [area of operations] much. You didn't do a lot of cross boundary operations as I saw it on the PDSS. So they physically went and got that guy and by the time we came in for the RIP/ TOA [transfer of authority], Colonel Farouq was in place with about 10 or 12 of the fledgling Iraqi Police Force.

Training-wise, in hindsight I don't know that there was any big gap. However, at the lieutenant level and, really, across the staff, we did not have a full appreciation of Iraqi history and did not realize how much of a welfare state it really was. That is, how much the people relied on kerosene lines, propane lines, certain handouts that were just expected. By default, when we became the government of Hadithah, we inherited all those same expectations from the population. That was a bit of a surprise to me and I think most of my company commanders. And then the tribal dynamics. As westerners, we just scratched the surface of the tribal angle. That became a big issue with Colonel Farouq who was from the Jughayfi tribe. People said the Jughayfi were all thugs and nobody wanted or respected the police because the members came primarily from the Jughayfi tribe. Just understanding and trying to sift through how much of that was just a story line of why they don't cooperate versus the true tribal dynamics was difficult. (4:21)

Knarr: What were some of the major events that took place while you were there?

Donnellan: We arrived in September '06 and stayed through April '07. As we came in, based on Colonel Cooling's recommendations, I moved my strongest [unit to Hadithah]. He said, "Hey, Hadithah is the center of gravity—as Hadithah goes, so goes the triad. "During the PDSS, Colonel Norm Cooling walked us through, and drove most of my Alpha Command Group through the site of the Hadithah incident,¹¹ so that we understood where it happened, what the population reaction was at the time, and what it had been since and really how Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) had used it since. The big eye opener for me was that the incident did not resonate so much more dramatically with the people than perhaps any other sad story that happens in war, whereas AQI really latched on to it because they saw the attention it got in the western media. And so it had grown a life of its own again within the triad, whereas for Colonel Cooling's first three or four months there, it was not the rallying cry that he heard when he held tribal or Sheik meetings and that kind of thing. (07:13)

So, we had about a dozen Iraqi police at the time, we had Echo Company in Hadithah, Fox in Barwana, and Golf in Haqlaniyah. My strongest company commander was Matt Tracey, my Echo Company Commander. I put him there in Hadithah with the very specific mission of syncing up with the CMOC [Civil-Military Operations Center] because that was located in Hadithah.

Unfortunately, most of our FOBs [forward operating bases] or company firm bases were in old schools, because that's just what was available when they fought their way back in on 3/1's watch into the city. Very early on I had said we got to move the battalion headquarters to Hadithah because that's where the political center of gravity is. We were headquartered up at the Hadithah Dam, which worked well for C2 and force protection, and the chow hall and all the support kind of stuff, but I wanted to get the bulk of the staff down to Hadithah proper. We didn't do that for a couple of months, but I knew very early on that that was something we wanted to move towards.

Shortly after arrival, we identified from 3/3's turnover that the bridges that had been destroyed were still being used by the insurgents, but couldn't be used by the local popu-

¹¹ In 2005, Marines killed 24 Iraqi civilians in the town of Hadithah. Eight Marines were charged in the killings. Charges have been dropped against all the Marines except for one—the trial is pending. Tony Perry, "Ruling Could Lead Marine Corps to Drop the Hadithah Case," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 2010. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/mar/24/local/la-me-marine24-2010mar24>

lous. It was a lose/lose scenario. Motorcyclists would drive across, hand off packages—IED material, what have you—but the average woman and her kids couldn't go from the Barwana side to the markets in Hadithah. So we started taking on the same projects that 3/3 had left us, or recommendations to try to get at least one of the bridges across the Euphrates reconstructed. They had been blown up a year-and-a-half, almost two years prior. [09:22]

In the mean time, in dealing with the half-a-dozen or dozen police that we had, we developed a plan to essentially berm in the triad as a whole. Certainly not a new idea, it had been done elsewhere, but Colonel Cooling had passed that on. They just didn't have the engineer assets available on their watch. Then I think there was some concern about whether it [the situation in Hadithah] was ready for that. Colonel Farouq, the police chief, was a big believer in trying to gain some control over who comes in and out of the city. As we stopped and chatted with folks on the street, they fully blamed all their troubles on people who were transients, who came in from the desert and planted IEDs. Now, granted, some of that we took with a grain of salt, but we couldn't prove or disprove it unless we at least attempted to try to berm the area.

Initially, we looked at doing the Hadithah side and then, as we talked with regiment and got an idea of the number and kind of assets they were pulling together for us, we realized it was quite significant: the Naval Construction Battalion, a number of engineer units, a lot of dozers. So we expanded the course of action to berm the entire triad, with the obvious gaps of the Euphrates. (10:56)

Just prior to going down to regiment to brief the final modification to the plan, our helicopter went down [3 December]. I lost my OPSO [operations officer] in that helicopter accident, and so we gapped a few days. Colonel Crowe, Regimental commander, came up for that memorial service, and we pitched a mod to the plan that Train McCloud, my operations officer, felt very passionately about. He and I had white-boarded it out several times and what it would take. We incorporated the thoughts from the company commanders.

Colonel Farouq was a big advocate of banning all vehicle traffic. We edged our way into that, eventually we got there, but initially we were just focused on motorcycles, at least on the bridges. From our ISR [intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance] assets we saw that every time there was an IED strike, we'd see a motorcycle or two scoot off from the point of impact. So initially, we were focused on banning motorcycles, allowing vehicles

to come through. We were pursuing up the chain [of command] some kind of unique sticker that we could put on the cars, almost like a fast pass, e-z pass kind of thing; at the same time, we had some captains who were just open-purchasing stickers from the States that had a holographic image. It came down to whatever sticker came in first that was effective—that is what we were going to use. We did not want the single point of failure to be whatever badge we put on the vehicles when we did register the vehicles. (11:33)

Over the course of September/October, that plan matured. We started that battalion size operation with both the population control piece of it and the engineer effort on about December 6th or 7th, a couple of days after the helicopter accident. It took several weeks to build that berm, but in the meantime, the company commanders and I were holding a number of Sheik meetings to explain what the rules were going to be. We wanted Colonel Farouq to be the guy explaining it; however, that was around the same time we started to learn that his reputation might not be as upstanding as we were hoping for in a police chief. There were some folks, mostly on the Hadithah side, who were fully on board with Colonel Farouq and who were going to send their sons into the Iraqi police, but that same conversation on the Barwana side or down in Haqlaniyah, didn't quite resonate with some of the Sheiks and Elders. They weren't as willing to trust their sons to Colonel Farouq's police force. Fortunately, by that time, the BLT [battalion landing team] minus had come ashore and was working the Barwana side with us; they started recruiting a Barwana-specific police force on their side of the river. We worked very closely with them because as the berm was completed the vehicle restrictions went into place, we had stickers on cars, we had people getting batted [biometric automated toolset, BAT], running biometrics on as many folks a day as we could coming through the checkpoints.

We also had an offer from Abdul al-Hakim to come down and volunteer to be the mayor. Initially, he was a guy that Farouq brought to our attention, so there was some question as to whether Farouq pulled his strings, but early on I was encouraged by the healthy friction between him and Farouq. Early on in meetings with just the three of us and the interpreter, he [Hakim] said, "I am only going to do this if I'm really the mayor and I'm in charge of him," and then of course Farouq took some exception to that because he essentially argued the point that, "We're still in a martial law environment so you're not really in charge of me, we're co-equals." The mayor just looked at me and said, "Well I'm only doing this if I'm really his boss." I turned to Colonel Farouq, and I said, "I

think he's your boss, I mean that's the way it works in civil society so we've got to get there," and then we kind of massaged it, "of course he understands that you're the lead on security issues, and he's not going to get in your business, but you really have to defer to him," which he never fully did but he at least made an effort to make the mayor feel like he was in charge.

Then we assigned Jeff Legangooth, our battalion SJA [staff judge advocate] to be the right-hand man to the mayor. He tried to move towards the rule-of-law side which was really lacking in the December/January timeframe. Jeff spent hundreds of hours talking to Colonel Farouq about everything. This includes individual detainee cases. As an example, a local Sheik or family elder went to the mayor and said, "Hey my kid got picked up eight months ago and I need you to get him back." Recognizing that the mayor was a big combat multiplier for us, we wanted to get those detainees back if there wasn't a legitimate case against them. [This would buy the mayor even more credibility with the people.]

In some cases, the detainees had been released and we didn't have a real good way of telling the Sheikh or elder where this guy went. However, in other, more recent cases, there were guys we had picked up that we could [figure out where they went]. As long as somebody would come and sign for him and say, "He's not going to be involved in insurgent activity," we could then do the open hand gesture of friendship and say, "Things are changing, you've got to be responsible for your own security." We really empowered the mayor by doing that. [17:31]

Then over the course of that time, the population control part of it really took effect. IED strikes were the immediate indicator as they started to dry up, because in the course of berming, we also did a very systematic search. Golf 2/4 augmented my battalion on the west side of the river, with the Battalion minus working the Barwana side; they did a census search and the batting and picked up a fair amount of IED-making material. But really, the largest caches were the ones we found with the RIVRON [Riverine Squadron] guys working the islands in the Euphrates. (18:33)

Part of Train McCloud's plan during the berming was to have the engineers cut some gaps in those bridges that were only partially submerged. We cut a gap in the bridges that allowed the RIVRON guys to get further down the Euphrates. We inserted both our engineers and some riflemen into the RIVRON patrols for security, and did systematic searches of all the islands in the Euphrates and found enormous caches of IED-making

material. The rules in place at the time were that we couldn't use rubber boats down the Euphrates, and since it wasn't a particular skill set that we had trained towards, it would have been somewhat of a liability anyway. But with the RIVRON guys, we just did very deliberate searches of each of those islands as the berms were being built. Additionally, we had some degree of control of who was coming in and out of the triad and we were also sucking up the material already resident inside that perimeter.

That kind of takes us through the January-early February time frame. Over the course of the next few months in theatre was really when the mayor grew into his own and marginalized Colonel Farouq a little bit because, by that point, he had recruited a pretty good sized police force, but mostly of Jughayfi tribe, most of the guys that he knew, had connections with, etc.

One of my lessons learned was something I knew from Afghanistan, but I slipped into by mistake one day in Iraq. One of Colonel Farouq's majors was a very capable guy, spoke pretty good English, had been in the Iraqi Army, was very professional, always looked squared away in uniform. He would speak very openly about what the police were doing right and what they were doing wrong. One day I agreed with him in front of Colonel Farouq and that guy was marginalized from that day forward. (20:42) I heard from Chip Bierman, commander 1/3 Marines, a few months later after we'd TOA'd that the major hit an IED on his way home on leave. He was from up near Farouq's hometown, up near Tikrit. I can't help but think that some of that was the threat he represented to Colonel Farouq because he was still the police chief during Chip Bierman's time out there [the-LtCol Bierman's unit, 1/3 Marines, replaced 2/3 Marines in April 2007]. [21:15]

But the mayor really, over the course of those last few months, really came into his own and was relentless about circulating the triad, having Sheik meetings, stopping shop owners on the street and asking them what they needed, getting street lights repaired and water mains fixed. The dramatic difference in the two halves of the deployment, the difference between the first few months and the last few months, that our Marines were fortunate to see, was pretty much night and day.

You know that it is certainly not one battalion's effort; we were just fortunate that it shifted on our watch and the Marines who lost a bunch of their buddies in those first three or four months were able to see that there was some light at the end of the tunnel. I think 1/3 [the follow-on battalion] lost a guy that was supporting their battalion, but, for

Norm Cooling and I to hear that was really rewarding. I think that kind of in a nutshell covers the real scope of the deployment. [22:31]

Knarr: I assume the mayor is still alive?

Donnellan: He is. I shared an email with him about 12 months ago, he was still alive then. I have not been in touch with him since. I'll send you his email address.

Knarr: We'd like to see him when we go over. I assume he would be a good person to talk to?

Donnellan: I think he would be; he was an appointed mayor. We worked with...I think it was Colonel Clardy [Colonel Herman Stacy Clardy, Commander, RCT-2] at Regiment, to get Hakim a trip down to Ramadi to have him blessed by the Al-Anbar governor as the legitimate mayor. But he was excited about actually running for office and being a legitimate representative and not just an appointed guy. During our watch, we moved him around the triad quite a bit, and he was essentially campaigning on our watch, which was fine with me because I thought it was a great thing for the people to actually see their mayor. He would never wear body armor, would never wear a helmet or flak. I asked him about his own personal protection and in a very stereotypical "Inshallah" way, but more genuine way he would say, "If the people want to kill me after seeing what I'm trying to do then so be it." It was pretty humbling that out of all that, a guy like Hakim could emerge. He was as close to the real deal as I saw in my deployment there. He would definitely be a guy I would want you to try to find. I would be curious whether he's still in a position of power or not, or he'd been marginalized because he was too good at what he was doing. He was handing out candy and taking pictures with kids and doing all the things good politicians do.

Knarr: How's your Azerbaijan Company? Were they still up at the dam? [22:34]

Donnellan: They were! Great soldiers; really good soldiers! Train had worked with them quite a bit. When the helicopter went down, you could tell they were genuinely grieving as well, because as the OPSO, Train went and made sure they were squared away, he made sure they were doing entry control procedures the way they were supposed to, and they were very tight. When they weren't on watch, there'd be a "gear explosion." But we just worked with them and said, "While you're on watch we expect the same things 3/3 did, you know that you're wearing your helmet and that you have your weapon." They were professional. Here at CENTCOM [Central Command], I see how much of the Coalition they really were, and they were it, they were the only external force in Al Anbar. They

were the only external force that made it MNF-W [Multi-National Force–West] as opposed to just US Forces West. They did a very credible job; a good bunch.

Knarr: In looking at Hadithah, one of the things that struck me was the population control, berming, census operations, bats, HIDE [Handheld Interagency Identification Detection Equipment], etc. One of our challenges is to tell the story down to the data. How do we do that? I know of course you don't have any data from the census operations with you, but how do we get a hold of some of that material to show its effectiveness?

Donnellan: I know in our complete AAR [after action report] we had the raw stats of how many persons we collected biometrics from, how many vehicles we registered, and then we picked up some folks just trying to walk into the ECP [entry control point] who had been batted elsewhere and had worked for the US in some capacity on one of the FOBs and then disappeared. Because of that, they were a security concern of, "Why did they disappear?" So we picked them up based on that just to try to run that to ground. We picked up guys for which an active flag of suspected involvement in x, y, or z existed. I don't know at what level that the raw data then got turned into something more comprehensive. (27:35)

Knarr: Do you have any idea where material such as the AAR might be?

Donnellan: No I don't.

Knarr: At the beginning, you talked about the tribal dynamics and then Colonel Farouq's tribe. It was the same tribe as the mayor, right?

Donnellan: No it was not.

Knarr: Then, I find it interesting that he would recommend Hakim as mayor. [29:29]

Donnellan: It was. And the mayor was very close-hold about his whole tribal background. He told me his whole personal story, he ended up being educated in Germany, had a master's degree, then he came back. He was actually from Al Qaim and I think he had a connection to Sheik Baram who lived on one of the islands right off Hadithah.

One thing I neglected to talk about was Sheikh Baram and when they killed him. Sheikh Baram was one of the Sheikhs that Colonel Cooling would talk to. I would imagine previous battalions had gone to talk to him also. He was a very well educated, widely respected guy. He was not Jughayfi. His tribe was from Al Qaim all the way to Jordan. I think he may have been Mahal. When they did kill him, there were Sheiks in Jordan who

were phoning my interpreter trying to have us arrange permission for them to come down and pay their respects.

It was kind of one of those classic moves of over-playing your hand, that, "If we [Al Qaeda] just kill this guy, we'll squelch this growing cooperation with the Americans." But in reality, Sheik Baram was not particularly cooperative with us. He always met with us. If Colonel Cooling wanted to meet with him, he would sit down with him. When Matt Tracey, my company commander in Hadithah, requested to meet him or when I requested to meet with him, he would always sit down with us, but he didn't tell you what you wanted to hear. He was a decidedly neutral kind of guy and he had an island, so he had a lot better ability to be neutral in the environment.

He was killed during probably February timeframe I would say, I don't know exactly. But after the berming, battling, badging was all in place, a couple of thugs got on to the island and shot him right in his courtyard. He pulled out a pistol and shot one of them as they fled and his family told that with great pride that even 70-something-year old Sheik Baram is going down fighting.

In fact, it back-fired on them [Al Qaeda] because his son, as a result of them over-playing their hand, said, "Well, my father didn't want to cooperate with you [Americans] because he didn't trust you." He had seen the American's ebb and flow in Hadithah and he was ready to take the tribe and put them all in with [the insurgents], but now that they've killed him, [he said] "I want to work with you. I just need one thing." I said, "You name it." He said, "I want you to take my family up to Al Qaim for protection and then I will come back." That is what makes me think that he was a sub-tribe of the Mahal, because that's where his son knew he could take his family to be protected. [33:14]

So we coordinated through Regiment, FRAG'd [fragmentary order] one of the lieutenants, went out to the Sheikh's place and loaded his belongings out. It was really quite a sad scene to see his beautiful home that had just been gutted and they threw all their belongings in a couple of cars, and my lieutenant escorted them all the way up to Al Qaim, stayed a few days, and returned. Then we went back out and picked up just the Sheikh's son. He became the mayor's right-hand man from that point forward. He was his administrative assistant. The mayor absolutely loved the guy, because he was a very well educated, capable guy. He had lived in Hadithah his whole life so he knew who turned the

street lights on, who fixed the water, and all that stuff. He was a great asset for Mayor Hakim. [34:05]

Knarr: Great! What did I miss? What part did I not ask you that you think is important to discuss?

Donnellan: The impact and the expectations at the lieutenant-to-squad-leader level are just astronomical. It's really impressive to watch the guys that "get it." I think our collective experience in Afghanistan helped that to some degree, because we had such a huge piece of real estate as did the previous battalions—that out of necessity, you've got to talk to the people a little more, work with the Afghan Army a little more. That experience really helped those lieutenants who had been part of the battalion on the previous deployment.

Thankfully, I let a guy go shortly before the deployment at Mojave Viper who showed an enormous amount of immaturity. At the time, you think, "Hey it's training, he's a lieutenant," but there's just not a lot of room for error when you take that same guy into theatre. It was two or three weeks in theatre when my XO turned to me and said, "Hey sir I think you made the right call on relieving lieutenant so and so," and it was after seeing some of what the lieutenants were managing in Iraq. It just reinforced what a high bar there is today for the lieutenants and the squad leaders, and how we just can't do enough when it comes to the training and education side to prepare those guys. They don't have the luxury of long pre-deployment work-ups and there's not a lot of room for error when they go into theatre. [36:48]

Then I think for me, from both tours, a lot of guys have articulated this in one form or another, but it's the command climate, whether it's a learning organization and how comfortable Marines are telling their lieutenant they don't agree with them. The same for the company commander. The command climate is something that, to me, was just exponential in establishing a hunger and willingness to learn, and "Hey sir I was thinking why don't we do this?" It is a very dynamic environment, and the opportunities are sometimes very fleeting.

You've got to understand that you've got some leeway to use some judgment, and yet also know where the red lines are, which for us was pretty clear with some of the escalation-of-force procedures that were in place and some of the expectations from MNF-West and MNF-I all the way down. But it was a very hard line to draw on, [and you needed be cautious of appearing to micro manage in hind sight], "Why did you shoot your pen flair, why didn't you do this." So it was a tough dynamic to establish a com-

mand climate where a squad leader didn't feel like you were second guessing his every move when he set up an ECP, but also expecting him to be this out-of-the-box thinker when he does a cordon and search at night when the guy [he is after] isn't in the target house you thought he was going to be in. It was a challenge. But, the two sergeants' major that I had between Afghanistan and Iraq, those guys and the two XO's that I had were huge combat multipliers, and putting that same mentality down to the company commanders who did a tremendous job reinforcing that: it is a squad leader's, platoon commander's fight by and large.

You know, day to day, they are the ones that see the little micro trends in a *souk* [market]; they are the ones that see a shop owner more than once. I tried to travel the battle space every day, and I still only saw the wave tops compared to what those guys saw. So the micro trends that they tell you they're seeing should be reinforced with what's coming in and who's capturing that? Do they have a company OPSO, an intelligence clerk that is taking these things down and really doing something with them? Or are they just staying in their own OODA [Observe, Orient, Decide, Act] loop, the current fight the whole time, not reinforcing them? That's certainly another aspect of it.

And then the role of the translators—they need to be more of a cultural advisor than just a translator. In Afghanistan, my guy was a cultural advisor, 62 year old CAT [category] 2 terp [interpreter], Secret clearance, taught at Monterey. Then I got to Iraq, and first I had an American citizen Kurd, who spoke with a Kurdish accent and got no traction when we traveled in Hadithah. Then he was injured in a mortar strike, and we brought up one of the terps from Echo Company in Hadithah that had been there since before 3/1's time in Hadithah, and had been in Hadithah so long that people knew him. Although he was a Shia from down south, he didn't let on where he was from, or what his background was, but he had been there so long that he had a little bit more credibility and was a better cultural advisor than the first guy was. But, neither compared to having that 62-year-old raised in Afghanistan, immigrated to America when he was 35 or so. The difference in caliber of what you have for a translator, interpreter as opposed to a true full up cultural advisor, who can explain Albu Risha, and Mahal, and where a Jughayfi tribe fits into the tribal structure—that was lacking in Iraq because of the demand for those guys. Then, of course, my company commanders had generally even less capable guys than I was blessed with. So to do what they do and not have that extra understanding, that extra layer that a cultural guy could bring was really impressive.

(40:14)

Knarr: We talk about troop levels, we talk about 1:50 being a rule of thumb, and you talked about Golf 2/4 coming in. Please talk about force levels: Did you feel you had enough? I know force level computation is not only about Coalition forces, but it is also Iraqi forces, and the type and quality of Iraqi forces. Can you tell me what difference the other company made?

Donnellan: By the time we got the MEU [Marine expeditionary unit] ashore, in general, support of the regiment was pushed down to us principally for the battalion operation of building the berm, doing the searches, and getting the biometrics done. I did not think we needed another rifle company on our side of the river, but if we had them, it made more sense to have them on our side of the river than the Barwana side. The difference in population was something like three to one. Barwana had about 15–20,000, Hadithah was well over 30,000 just in Hadithah proper, and then Haqlaniyah was somewhere in between. So we certainly had the preponderance of the population in Hadithah, on the west side of the river. So as to help for this search and the battling part of it, yes, we needed some extra boots on the ground just to speed that up, so that it wasn't this three-week-long nightmare for the citizens of the triad. But after that, they went back over to 2/4, to their parent battalion and worked that side of the river. As a consequence, I think they recognized that they could branch out a little further south than just Barwana, so they started operating outside the berm and trying to see what the area of influence was, the area of interest outside the berm as we did the same in some of the smaller towns up north.

What I didn't really address was our relationship with the ISF [Iraqi Security Forces]. When we first got there it was all Iraqi Army [and no police]. We talked to Colonel Cooling during the PDSS, and he said, "You've got to work the police, that's who's going to run it for you, and the Iraqi Army are all Shia, they're not really widely respected." Having said that, the Iraqi Army was still a pretty capable bunch.

Knarr: What unit was there? Elements of the 7th division?

Donnellan: 2/2/7 [2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Division].

Colonel Dale Alford: Yeah, the 2/7 headquarters was down at Al Asad.

Donnellan: Absolutely! So with their consent, we agreed that the mission was best served with them operating on the exterior of the mission and we used the police for the urban area. So we went with them up to some of the smaller towns on our boundary to the north with Sparky's guys. Sparky Rentforth was up north at Rawah, and there were a

couple of small towns in between us where we used the Iraqi Army to work the coordination, with the police still going with us to operate in the interior areas. Their strength was really waning by the time we got there. It was tough duty for them and they were not welcome. Soldiers would go home on leave and never come back. Anbar was a tough place to be if you were a Shia Iraqi soldier.

But force level-wise, the first two-to-three months we had responsibility all the way down to Baghdadi. When we gave that battle space up and I was able to bring weapons company up to the K3 oil refinery in Haqlaniyah, I felt like we had plenty of boots on the ground for the mission. We had a company in Barwana, a company in Hadithah, a company in Haqlaniyah, and weapons company working pretty much the mobile exterior stuff and the oil refinery and I thought that was about right especially with the relationship, with the Iraqis. (46:40)

MajGen Tom Jones: You mentioned bats, separation of companies, and "Intel cells." Did you start the company Intel cells officially or augment people to build the cells themselves or what?

Donnellan: Based on what Colonel Cooling had done in Afghanistan, we had pushed Intel guys down to the companies in Afghanistan and then we did the same thing in Iraq.

Subject: Interview with Chief Warrant Officer Three Tony Goble, former member of Special Forces Operational Detachment (ODA) 545 in Hit

CW3 Tony Goble spent several tours in Iraq. He operated with SFODA 545 in August 2005. The team was initially assigned to work out of Al Asad and work the area from Ramadi to Hit and Hit to Al Asad. However, the distances were too great and they moved the team to live in Hit. Most of their work was with the Albu-Nimr tribe in the Hit area.

CW3 Goble was interviewed on 21 April 2010 at the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) headquarters at Camp Victory by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC.



The following is his account of events.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Please provide your name and background.

CW3 Tony Goble: My name is Tony Goble. I've been in the military for 19 years. I started off in the infantry. In '92, I went to Special Forces selection, and then in '93, I went to the Special Forces Q [Qualification] Course. I showed up at Fort Campbell, Kentucky in 1994. I started as an 18 Bravo, and I've been fortunate that I've been able to stay there ever since with the 5th Group. [2:08]

Knarr: When did you first come into Iraq?

Goble: During January of '03. We staged at Ali Al Salem [in Kuwait].

I came back in '04. So when the ODB [Operation Detachment Bravo] went out west the first time, my detachment worked in the city. We were at the Ministry of Oil Compound, in Baghdad.

Knarr: So when did you then start working the west?

Goble: We were out there August of '05 and I was with 545.

Knarr: I understand that the teams were out there but had been withdrawn, I guess, by 10th Group, and all of a sudden they went back out. When you went in, was that when the 10th Group was reinserted? [4:13]

Goble: Roger. That was after. The period between what we call '03-'04 timeframe for OIF [Operation IRAQI FREEDOM] when Adam Such was the Battalion S3. We wanted to get SOF [Special Operations Force] teams back out west. That's where our detachment came into play. That's when Andy Marchal, who had been out there previously, was the detachment team sergeant for 545.

So we'd already had that history of Andy's work with the Nimr [tribe] out west the first rotation they were out there. He was out at Al Asad initially in '04. They had from Al Asad all the way down to Ramadi. I mean they worked that whole area. So that's where they met the Nimr. The first time they laid that initial foundation.

Knarr: What connection did you have with the Desert Protectors?

Goble: Other than the successes that the team had in '04, we wanted to do the same thing there in the Hit area between Ramadi and Hit and Hit and Hadithah. Kind of like an ink spot, we wanted to connect those dots.

Knarr: I believe the name Desert Protectors started in '05. Did you hear of them before that?

Goble: During our rotation we had heard about it. We had teams out in Al Qaim, Hadithah, and Hit. We looked it as like Apache Scouts, more so than the Desert Protectors. I can't recall if we'd heard about it, but we had heard it [the concept] in '05 and that carried over from the work in '04.

Knarr: That's interesting. I guess you were then connected with the Albu-Nimr?

Goble: Right. Initially, we showed up at Al Asad. I think it was a surprise to everybody even though the group had gone out and tried to lay some foundation. Initially, they wanted us to work out of Al Asad, but the distance between Al Asad and Hit was going to put a lot of strain on logistics and the time that we would get to spend in the area or with the Nimr. So we opted to load up, and we headed out to Hit.

When we showed up there, there was a Marine Weapons Company there. We talked to Major White and asked him, "Hey look, we were basically assigned out here. We're looking for a place to work out of." He directed us to the far side of the camp where the SeaBees [construction battalions - CBs] were living. They were there to build the temporary SWA [Southwest Asia] Huts for the IA [Iraqi Army] who were living there. They gave us a place to live. It wasn't much. It was one room. We bunked all ten of our guys in one room, and we worked out of half the Op Center where the SeaBees were set up for about two months. So then we started drawing that connection. We were actually

talking to the Marine HET [HUMINT exploitation team] trying to get in contact with one of our former guys that Andy knew. We called him Nubs.

Knarr: Name?

Goble: It was Nubs. That's what we knew him by, because he had blown up his fingers fishing with hand grenades.

Knarr: So you made the connection. Can you walk the sequence of actions? [8:50]

Goble: I can. Well, through the Marine HET we got word to Nubs that we were back in the area. When I said we, I mean Andy, because that is who Nubs knew. He agreed to meet us, and we scheduled a time and a place in the desert to meet. We got word to him about near and far recognition signals, so we knew it was him. So we met him, and once everything was okay and security was good, he came forward. He saw Andy, and it was instant rapport. We kind of already had our foot in the door, if you will, at least with that portion of the tribe. So from there, using Nubs as our go between, we used him to get with Sheikh Hatim, Hikmat, and Sheikh Al Jubayr. [9:22]

From there we spent a lot of time talking with him and feeling him out. We were seeing if their allegiance or alliance was pro-government. We spent a lot of time on that side of the river camping out at night in the desert as our security posture. Then during the day, we'd go in, link back up with him, and continue some conversations to the point where we felt that they were on board with at least wanting to see the area change and wanting to bring security to the area.

Initially going in, we knew we wanted to develop some sort of fighting force, because we didn't have one. We knew what we needed it in order to go and hit targets. Plus, we needed the information and the knowledge that the locals had in order to find the bad guys.

They [insurgents] blew up the bridge there in Hit, so that, I guess, was a blessing for us. It was not a blessing for the people of the town, but I guess it was a blessing for us. Even though we spent two-and-a-half to three hours driving down the pipeline road over to Highway 12, to Highway 1, cut through Ramadi and come in the back side—it allowed us to spend seven-to-ten days out there at a time. So, we'd live in the desert, come in and talk, or they'd come to us. We were building that foundation and that rapport. We initially brought them on board as giving us soldiers or people that they believed we could train in order to provide us with what we did and came to be known as the Desert Protec-

tors. First class was probably about 25 or 30 guys. When we brought them back it was late September, October timeframe that we looked at starting to train these guys.

Knarr: And you called them Desert Protectors?

Goble: Well, initially they were scouts, because we had to figure out a way of bringing them into the IA unit there. [12:42] There was an IA unit, and it's tough because [you have to] get them paid. So we had to legitimize them; that was key. Bring them in, legitimize them, get them associated with an IA unit—so we could get them on payroll, and get them equipped.

We got them SWA Huts down there to live, so that we could do training and coordinate their leave cycle with them. That's why we had them down in the IA camp. That worked out well for the remaining part of that rotation. Then, the second time around when we came back, they weren't really accepted by the IA, because the IA had all done their training, kind of like a covert unit, separately at Basic, whereas these guys had been trained by us. So then when we went back out there for a second rotation, six months later, we made a move to making them cops, SWAT [Special Weapons And Tactic teams].

Knarr: Instead of part of the IA?

Goble: Yeah, just to keep them legitimate and get them a paycheck.

Colonel Dale Alford: That was in August of '06?

Goble: I think so, because we made some trips to Ramadi and talked with a guy in charge of running the state police there. I can't think of his name. He had a highway patrol that ran highway 1, MSR Michigan. He was in charge of the highway patrol, so we picked his brain about how do we get these guys integrated into the police. Well, we got to get them to the academy. So we started working that piece out ourselves, so we could get those guys to stay in the area and still be an action arm under the police.

Knarr: And how'd that all work?

Goble: It worked out really well, because they were starting to stand up more and more law enforcement officers in the Hit District. They really didn't have one element that was a strike element, and these guys turned out to be that. We took the core of the initial scouts or the Desert Protectors and continued their training. Then we set up another class to where we had 50 of these guys. Our method was to have half of them back in Al Farad, or Al Zuwara, to protect the home, and half doing training and operations with us. Sometimes they'd go, and they'd come to us, sometimes we'd be going to them.

Knarr: Where was their home?

Goble: They lived in Al Farad in Al Zuwara, across the river. [16:12] It would be between Hit and Ramadi, north side of the river.

Knarr: I think that's interesting. When the Albu-Mahal tribe moved down to Akashat and developed the Desert Protectors, part of the unit stayed in Akashat and protected the tribe. Another part of the unit was moved back into Al Qaim to fight with the Marines there. Do you recall whether that was used that as a template? Or did the stuff that happened in Al Qaim even come to mind?

Goble: No, I don't think so. I think it just made sense. If these guys are going to be our strike force then they're going to have a lot of enemies. So in order for them to feel comfortable, we needed to provide them a way of feeling like their homes and families were taken care of. [16:55]

Knarr: After your first deployment when you started the seeds of this unit, who replaced you to be able to pick that up?

Goble: After our first rotation out there in Hit, we were replaced by 182. It was a 1st Group team.

Knarr: Did they have the same interest in developing those guys the way you did?

Goble: I think they saw the pros of it. I'm not sure if they maintained the same path per se.

Knarr: I mean, you would have known when you came back?

Goble: Roger, and not knowing what obstacles they faced during their rotation, it's hard to say. Things had changed when we got back. It wasn't on the same path, which may have been what helped lead to us changing our focus from the scouts to the IA and to the police.

Alford: Also, when you came back the second time, you had a whole battalion in Hit. You had just a reserve company [Weapons Company, 3/25 Marines] there your first time.

Goble: And I think they were split up. They were like a weapons company minus and they had to travel all the way from Hadithah to Hit.

And during that first rotation in Hit, we went through five or six different units.

We saw two different MEUs [Marine Expeditionary Unit] come through—22 and 24.

Alford: But when you came back in '06, you had a full battalion.

Goble: We did—1-36 Infantry, 3ID, an Army battalion, commanded by Colonel Graves.
[19:48]

Alford: And he was replaced by a Marine battalion, right?

Goble: 1-36 was replaced by 2-7 Infantry, an Army battalion commanded by Colonel Crissman.

That first rotation, we had made the same assessment that there wasn't enough focus from higher up on that place. It was almost a training area for guys coming in. I can't remember which guy said it, but one guy came in and he had five things that he wanted to accomplish before he got back out, because he was coming through on a float. So he had five things that he wanted to accomplish. Okay.

But, I think the real turning point for the place was when they did focus attention. When they had the 1-36 out there, that place was hot. As a matter of fact, the Command Sergeant Major who was out there with 1-36 recently moved to the area near Fort Campbell [where I live]. We see each other, and we have this bond, if you will, from that timeframe. We talked about it. They, 1-36, sustained a lot of losses. I mean that town was hot. It was snipers during the day. When they ran the patrols at night, it was IEDs and mines. I want to say they lost something like three main battle tanks. They actually breached the tank hulls. They lost three of those and at least a company's-worth of Bradleys to IEDs. It was a bad place.

In a Special Forces guy's opinion, coming back that second time was good. We talk about sending people back to places and keeping that same rapport. I truly believe that what allowed us to be successful in my OIF 4 and 5 was the fact that Andy was out there before and had that relationship with the Nimr. It cut down the timeframe to build that rapport, that trust. It was a two way street. We trust them, and they trust us. Then coming back again we brought back everybody. Captain Lindeman was back for his second trip.

He'll be coming back in theatre here with the 4th Battalion. I think he's coming as a Battalion XO for a while. You know, he comes back, and I come back. A lot of our young guys who have had the hands-on piece for the training [come back]. They've got this instant bond with these guys from running around in the groves and streets at night.

[24:05]

Knarr: Knowing that this is going back to Warrant Officer Career College, NCO Academies, Command & General Staff College and War College, what would you want them to

know about your experiences there and working that area? I mean you already mentioned one, this rotation back was absolutely critical.

Goble: Yeah, absolutely correct. [24:39]

There are a number of things. How do we get buy-in from the locals? You need the locals to have buy-in for the security piece. Integrating CA [civil affairs] PSYOPS [psychological operations], I think, was key. We used the CA teams, not only our CAT A team that we had with us, but during the first rotation with the Marine Corps CAT A team, we used our Civil Military Teams to do small, easy projects like restoring a water pump or electricity. We did things that would give us credibility. We thought, "Hey, we can do this," and then we got it done using those enablers to our advantage. It's not all about just going out and whacking the mole. It's about building basic services for the people, because it provides security and stability for them. So, using the enablers at hand that you have [is critical].

Also, creative thinking that is outside the box [is useful]. [For example,] During our extensive talks with the Nimr out there at their compound, we would bring up ideas like, "Hey, you know, the police don't have holsters. They need holsters. We would like the people of Zuwayyah to buy them holsters." So, they provided us with money from their pockets. I guess maybe it came from our pockets, but it gave them pride over the project. [26:58]

We talked with Hikmat, who was Jubayr's son. We mentioned to him that the SWAT needed uniforms. We'd figure out a way to send him to Baghdad or he'd send a runner to Baghdad. He'd bring back pants. We were supposed to be getting it from the first rotation of the Desert Protectors, from the Army and police side. But it was hard to get that stuff. The resources just weren't available. Having buy-in from the tribe [is essential].

Knarr: That makes sense. Is there anything else that you would add to this?

The Coalition is starting to transition out. What do you see in this transition? Are we doing it right?

Goble: Yeah, right now we're working with the ERB [Emergency Response Battalions], which is another SWAT element. Our company has a second and third ERB. In my opinion, these guys are at the level that we've done what we can do for them. We've trained them, we've advised them, and they can develop the mission from start to finish. We used to call it "unilateral," but now we call it "enabled." Guy X comes to you with a

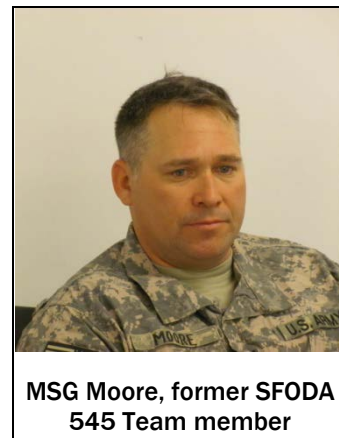
complaint. They can turn the complaint into a warrant. They can go from the warrant to the planning to where they're sending out their snitches, if you will, to find the targeted individual. They can make a plan. They can execute the plan. They can bring him back. They can hold him [captured individual], and transfer him over to, for instance, Hillah. They can take him to the Hillah CID [Criminal Investigation Department], and further develop the questioning and investigation to the point where he goes before the judge. So, yeah I think we are.

Knarr: So you've walked them through this process.

Goble: Yeah, I think they've got it. I think they're ready to continue forward.

Subject: Interview with MSG Martin Moore, former member of Special Forces Operational Detachment (ODA) 545 in Hit

MSG Martin Moore had several tours in Iraq: He participated in the initial invasion in 2003, he was with the Special SOTF headquarters S2 (Intelligence) Shop in 2004 and 2005 (Operation IRAQI FREEDOM -- OIF 2 and OIF 3), he was a member of ODA 545 in 2006 and 2007, and, at the time of the interview in 2010, he was a member of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (SFG).



During his tour with ODA 545, August 2006 thru April 2007,¹² the detachment worked the area from Ramadi to Hit and Hit to Al Asad. However, the distances were too great and they moved the team to live in Hit. During that time, he/the ODA engaged with the local sheikhs becoming very good friends with the Al-Gaoud family, a very influential family in the Albu-Nimr tribe, helped develop the Desert Protectors in the Hit area and helped develop the local police.

MSG Martin Moore was interviewed on 21 April 2010 at the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) headquarters at Camp Victory, Iraq, by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC.

The following is his account of events during that period.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Please provide your name, current assignment and background?

MSG Martin Moore: MSG Martin Moore, I am currently with Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (SFG). I first came to Iraq during the invasion of 2003.

Knarr: When did you deploy to Al Anbar?

Moore: I arrived here in mid-summer of 2005 and was located in Baghdad during this rotation for OIF-3. The teams had been withdrawn from Western Iraq in 2004 by 10th Group. We wanted to put teams back out there with the Marines. We were looking for tribal buy-in. We wanted them to take care of their own areas. We thought, "Maybe we could get them

¹² Master Sergeant Andy Marchal, now retired, was the ODA 545 Team Sergeant for OIF 3, July 2005 to January 2006. Andy worked with the initial Desert Protectors during their startup in the Hit area.

to turn a shoulder to Al Qaeda and develop a more patriotic type buy-in with the GOI [Government of Iraq].”

Knarr: When did the teams go back out?

Moore: MSG Andy Marchal, now retired, was ODA 545 team sergeant for OIF 3 and they were out in Anbar and Al Asad from roughly July 2005 thru Jan 2006. At the time I was in the S2 shop in charge of information and resources. Lieutenant Colonel Adam Such was the S3.

Knarr: How did the Desert Protectors start?

Moore: LTC Such was a company commander out there during OIF-2, in the ‘04 timeframe. He worked with a lot of the tribes and later he became our S3. He thought it was important to tackle the situation head-on. Guys like Andy Marchal had been out there in OIF-2. [He was] in Baghdadi, in the Euphrates area around Hit to Baghdadi, Haditha, Rawah and Al Qaim.

So, I had worked with Colonel Sha’ban and all those guys up there in Baghdadi. That area was always viewed as a critical location. Especially Baghdadi, Al Asad, Hit, Muhammadi, and Kubaysah—it’s sort of a natural choke point [with routes] from all the borders with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria [meeting there].

Knarr: So you started working that in the summer of 2005?

Moore: We reinserted teams out there.

Knarr: How many teams went out?

Moore: ODA 555 was out there. I want to say they were in Baghdadi. Then 545 went out to Hit. They started at Al Asad but then ended up moving to Hit and locating with the Marines out there. [6:42]

Alford: That’s the time that Captain Joe came out to see Al Qaim. It was September of ‘05. Was that during your time?

Moore: No, they were from 3rd Battalion. I want to say that the teams were reinserted in the July timeframe of ‘05. Then the rotations continued after that: 1st Group was out there, and then we [5th Group] replaced first group again. Then 10th Group replaced us, and then the SEALs [sea, air, land] took over the west.

Knarr: When they arrived in mid-July, how long did they stay?

Moore: They stayed all the way until January, and then they were relieved by 1st Group. 1st Group left. Then I became the Team Sergeant for 545 in '06. We went in August '06 to Hit, and that's really where my personal involvement began. Once we arrived, Anbar was declared politically lost.

Knarr: The Devlin Report?

Moore: Yeah. But, I didn't think anything was lost. It was definitely a very violent place, but there were a lot of centers of gravity out there. You had the Albu-Mahals who had already gotten tired of Al Qaeda interfering with their lives to some extent the year before.

Knarr: So they flipped first?

Moore: I'm not sure. There was a lot of that. It was like the chicken or the egg, because you have guys like Sheikh Bazee Majil Nijris al-Gaoud who lives in Jordan now. He had been a large part of that and he was from the Ramadi area and belonged to the Albu-Nimr tribe. His daughters were married to Sheikh Jubayr who was the brother of Abdul Razaq, who was the king of the Albu-Nimr tribe out in that area. I think he was killed in '04 or '05.

Knarr: So you saw some of this even before the Albu-Mahal in August/September of '05. Is that correct?

Moore: Yeah, but Anbar was just a completely miserable and violent place. Mostly our battle space was Baghdadi to Rutbah to Muhammadi, just west of Ramadi. It's a pretty large area. [10:37]

Knarr: So what did you do? Who were the tribes, and how did you work with them?

Moore: The Albu-Nimr Tribe has about 750,000 people. They're for sure the largest Sunni tribe in Iraq, therefore, quite possibly, the largest portion of the problem out there. Once we got out there, we engaged them. Major Lindeman and Chief Goble, ODA 545 had been there previously and struggled through a lot of growing pains. After the detachment had left, Hit got a lot more violent. When we arrived in 2006, every day there were five to seven significant activities, like an IED [improvised explosive device] or a sniper.

1-36 Infantry, commanded by [Lieutenant] Colonel Thomas Graves, was from Germany.¹³ They were really a good unit, but they were just getting hammered—everyday, down there

¹³ 1-36 Infantry was part of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, stationed in Germany.

in the [11:30] COPs [combat outposts]. I remember they lost their whole chain of command in one of the companies: commander, XO [executive officer] and first sergeant, all got hit one night. Somebody was always getting shot up on their roof at COP1 when you entered Hit. Just as you drive into that place coming from the little camp Hit, you start hearing explosions, AK fire, and PKC fire. I always described it like *Schindler's List* when you went into Hit, because it [the city] was just beat up and in ruins. It was kind of like a black and white movie until you get all the way through the city on the other side of the river.

Then it was a little bit better by Jubayl when you get to the north side of the river and going out to the Gaoud Compound where Sheikh Abdul Razaq's compound was located. His son, Sheikh Hatim took over for him. They all lived together: Dr. Wahab, Sheikh Jubayr, Sheikh Hikmat, all of them; they all lived out there in Zuwayyah. So, in general, the place was just violent. When we got there, the lines of communication were owned by Ansar al-Sunna, Jaish Tawhid wal-Jihad or in other words, Al Qaeda. The key infrastructure was owned by them. They had a three-man city council. They controlled everything. In general, it was just a violent place.

At least from the ODA perspective, trying to help out the larger Army and trying to help out the Marines' greater cause out there with a Colonel Blake Crowe [Commander, Regimental Combat Team 7], we didn't feel like we could do anything in that urban area that was going to be very beneficial. In the outlying areas, those lines of communication, Bronze, Uranium, some of the smaller places like Kubaysah and Muhammadi, Kasraj [phonetic], heading north from Hit towards Al Asad along Route Bronze, that was a real violent place, too. The Marines were always finding a lot of munitions and things stock-piled out there. Anytime somebody used that route they, they were probably going to get blown up. That was what we tackled first, the lines of communication. We tried to tackle it by using non-kinetic means. We felt that there was just a huge amount of Sunni dissatisfaction with their government and with their lot in life. But, it didn't seem like they [the Iraqis] were all bad.

I opened up the COIN manual, the old one that's like the 1980 version or something. We thought if we could appeal to the masses and get them to stop actively fighting us and supporting [the insurgency]. They didn't have to tell on anybody yet, but just let the Army and Marines pass through their area. Then we would be making some headway. So, we started meeting with as many people as we could in the outlying areas. And we start-

ed out, of course, with the Albu-Nimr Tribe out in Zuwayyah. I am just pointing out the fact that it was a horrible place.

I'd often described the Hit District as being a patient that has a terminal cancer; without emergency surgery, he's going to perish. So, we engaged the people in the local population. I know that the Marines had done a really good job in getting more police, but there was still a disparity. You had a place like Amarah [phonetic], where I served before, and it had like 15,000 cops there. It was a similar size. Hit District probably had 300–400 up in Baghdadi, 400–500 down in Hit, none in Muhammadi, 35 or 50 in Kubaysah, and none anywhere else. The law really was the Marines or the Army in a lot of those areas. [17:42]

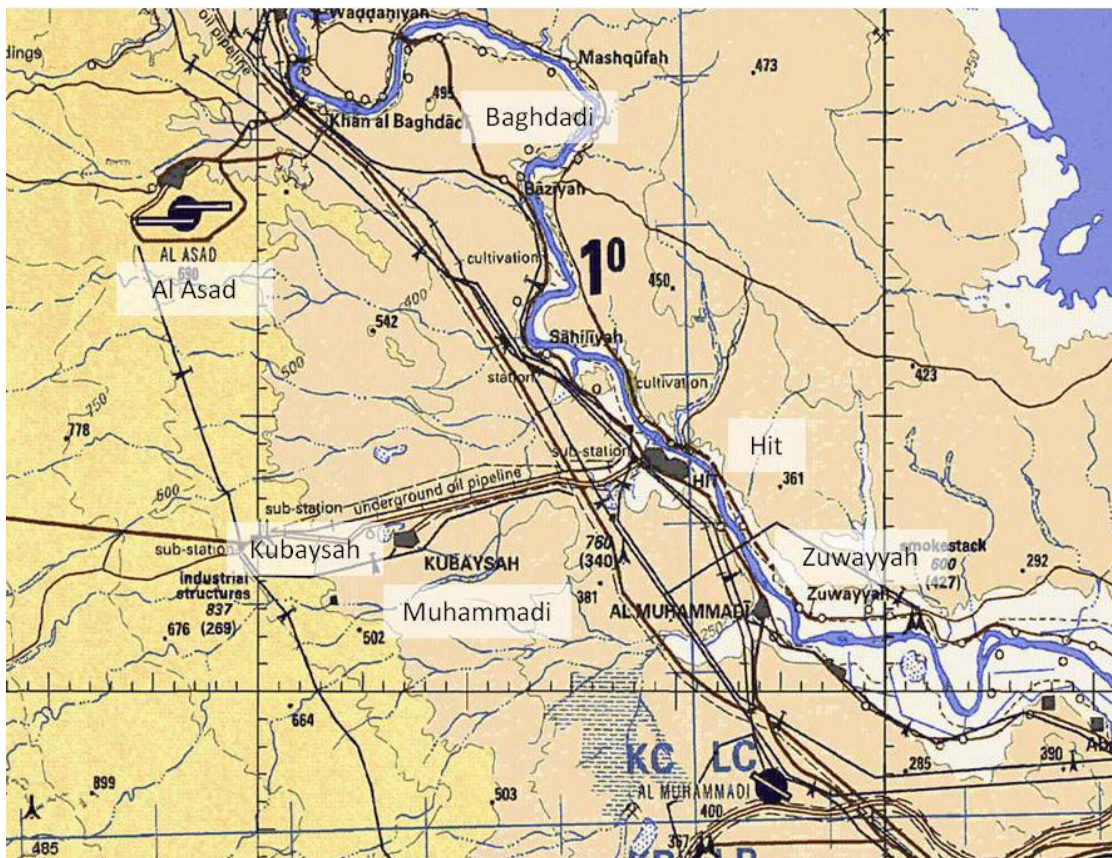


Figure A-1. Map of Area of Operations

Knarr: When you talked about working with the Nimr tribe and using non-kinetic means, what did you do? First of all, you said you tried to at least clean up the lines of communication.

Moore: That's the way we did it. We looked at it like if we could just get out there and inhale the situation and exhale some possible solutions, especially helping them find the solutions. The problem out there was bigger than any American could solve. Without the tribal buy-in by the people, it was impossible for us. There had been a lot of work going on, but I think it took more time. We spent about six or eight hours a day out there with those people sitting there suffering, listening to them. The longer we were there, the more we were able to impart our ideas on them. But their ideas were rubbing off on us a little bit. We started getting the police out. We went out every day. We just tried to stay really busy driving around the northern area. You know the desert area by Thar Thar? All the bridges had been blown up there so no one really patrolled in that area, so we started patrolling in that area. We got small elements out there, and we got the Iraqis out and about. We found some foreign fighters, we captured a lot of equipment, and we captured a lot of munitions. I think mostly it was just putting our presence out there.

Knarr: You did that with the Iraqis then?

Moore: Yeah.

Knarr: Where did you guys live?

Moore: We lived at Camp Hit. It was a small FOB [forward operating base]. There was a gas station with a couple of buildings, and we lived there. We used to exit the gate everyday and go out and visit with them. We had the remnants of the Desert Protectors. There were 20 of them roughly who remained. They were just having a lot of problems, because they'd been put into the Army. But the Army didn't really want them. They were all still privates even after a year-and-a-half. It wasn't going very good. We ended up sending them all to the Police Academy in Jordan. We started the SWAT [Special Weapons And Tactics] they graduated 25 SWAT in December '06. [20:47]

We had recommended that there be a clearing operation in Hit. In December we trained up those 25 SWAT guys in a 21-day period training program. We wanted to have an indigenous force to help us, because a lot of the problem, I think, in Anbar in general and in Ramadi and Fallujah was the Americans. We were really the enemy, because we were always put in a situation where we had to be the enemy. There wasn't an Iraqi face on the rule of law even though people were really trying hard to make it an Iraqi face. So, from our perspective, and I know that Colonel Crowe agreed, there needed to be an Iraqi face on just about everything, whether they deserved it or not. We told them, "This is

your country and this is your area. It's not mine; it's yours; you need to solve it for yourselves. If it continues to stay like this, you'll have nothing." [21:37]

During our first patrol we stopped at the police, which we didn't have a lot of contact with. We had three guys with us in our trucks when we went and did a small patrol. We went up to Baghdadi, and we brought four or five of them down. They helped us with some checkpoints. Then three or four months into it, we had between 30 and 130 police in various uniforms and in various sizes running around. We did large clearing operations in Muhammadi, Kubaysah, and all along [Route] Bronze, trying to get those lines of communication open. Our goal was to make the enemy more tired than us and to force them to look over their shoulder. They just didn't know when we were ever going to be there. We had Marine dog teams who started pushing forward. Al Qaeda stayed in the gravel factories, the chicken farm buildings, and the palm groves, because the people wouldn't let them live with them so to speak, but they'd let them live around them. They just lived out there. So we tried to take away the places they were living,

We had another idea. The Iraqis were never happy with the city council. So Hikmat Jubayr was nominated to be their mayor. He had somewhat of a checkered career as mayor. When we went and announced that he was the new mayor, he and I were blown up by an IED out by one of the traffic circles on our way out of town. But at least while he was mayor he cooperated with the chief of police.

Alford: Who was the police chief?

Moore: Ibrahim Hamid Jaza [also known as General Hamid], who's in jail now. I don't know what he did. He was getting harder and harder to be friends with, and then when we left, he was thrown in jail.

Those are the two things that were successful by two kind of shady characters. I mean, I don't want to say that Sheikh Hikmat is a shady character, but they all kind of are. Hamid, the Chief of Police, went from major to general it seemed like in three months. But he really was brave. I think that he and Hikmat Jubayr really made the most effort. They pooled their resources and worked together even though they hated each other. I think, at least in the Hit District, the people kind of turned their shoulder to Al Qaeda. But I think there was some help from 1920 Revolution Brigade.

We sought them [1920 Revolution Brigade] out and we sought out the Special Republican Guard. We felt like those were our main enemies out there, maybe not Al Qaeda proper. We tried to get information to 1920 and the Special Republican Guard. And

again, non-kinetically, while we were doing patrols and raids and things, we would say, "If you guys can stop the violence here and just turn your shoulders to Al Qaeda then pretty soon the Americans will leave, and you'll get what you want. You'll be in charge of your area." It didn't take them very long to actually be in charge of everything. I was out there last week, and I didn't recognize it, you know? I was surprised. We drove through town, and we didn't get blown up for the first time ever! We went down Route Cherry and then along the hospital along the river. The roads were made of concrete now instead of dirt. [26:50]

Knarr: When I think of the Desert Protectors, I primarily think of the Albu-Mahal tribe out west. When you mentioned the Desert Protectors, you mentioned having so many of them in your area down in Hit that you worked with.

Moore: We had about 20, but we ended up turning them into SWAT. We started the SWAT training program and ended up with 64 of them all together.

Knarr: Did you consider that to be part of the Desert Protectors? I'm trying to figure the extent of the Desert Protectors.

Moore: I would just say it was an extension of it. We took civilian militia, and turned them into something legitimate. We turned them into a fighting force that was willing to at least tangle with the Al Qaeda.

Alford: Were those 20 that you were working with locals? Were they from Hit?

Moore: Those were the original Desert Protectors.

Knarr: So the Desert Protector program grew to be much larger than just the ones from Al Qaim that moved out to Akashat and were vetted into the Army.

Moore: Right.

Knarr: So the program was bigger than Al Qaim. We know it affected Hit. Where else were people known to be Desert Protectors along the Euphrates?

Moore: I know Al Qaim was the first. I want to say probably up in Rawah or Hadithah there were some. Colonel Sha'ban's gang in Baghdadi was probably the large portion. Then in Hit there were some, and there had to be some in Ramadi, I'm sure.

Colonel Dale Alford: Doc, you remember I said a lot of them turned into cops? This has all been going into 3/7. That's what you're seeing here. They became policemen out in Al Qaim, too. I'm certain now that they came into the Army.

Knarr: Yeah, Al Qaim might have started it, but it sounds like it may have expanded to other places.

Alford: They became policemen very quickly.

Moore: They weren't able to survive in the military, because they were really guerillas. That's pretty much what they were, and now they were legitimized. Sheikh Hatim provided them and before that Abdul Razaq provided them—they provided the people; and signed a security agreement with the US. They pledged their support against Al Qaeda. And then that tribe actually paid for holsters and uniforms. When we made the 64-man SWAT and when Hikmat became the mayor, Sheikh Hatim and Dr. Wahab got them uniforms, holsters, and they helped them out a lot. They were always working on their vehicles. We got them some HMMWVs, some armored HMMWVs, and some pick-ups. So the tribe really bought into those guys that were from there. We were just trying to make them a team. Andy Marchal used to call it a country club, a group of people that seemed to have everything, were happy, and had peace in their area. They definitely did, but Hit didn't. Zuwayyah, Furat and Taliswad were pretty nice, but Hit was not. Muhammadi was not nice. Sheikh Farris, you know, of his four sons, I think, three got killed maybe by Al Qaeda. One is still alive.

Knarr: So Albu-Nimr was the primary tribe you guys worked with? [31:23]

Moore: We did. That's where Sheikh Hikmat became the mayor. Ibrahim Hamid Jaza who is in jail, was from that tribe. They were the security. You had other tribes like under Sheikh Ibrahim Metanine [phonetic], in the city and other tribal elements that were not very supportive of the US presence and involvement. They were not tolerant and they actively supported the insurgency and just terrorist activities in general. So that was the lines of communication. Then we changed the government out. Hikmat made a new city council that met regularly. He basically marginalized the former city council that was known to be part Ansar Al Sunna. They ran the power station, the water station, and the cement plant. We felt like we had some buy-in from the tribes at that point in time. We continued to patrol. When 1-36 left in February 2007, 2-7 Infantry came in under Lieutenant Colonel Doug Crissman. We convinced them that it would be a good idea if his unit and the Iraqi Army, which hardly ever did anything in Hit, surrounded the town so that we would take a small element and go in with the Iraqis. That was called Operation SHURTA NASSIR in February 2007.

Knarr: It was called what?

Moore: *Shurta Nassir*—it means “police victory.” *Shurta* means police and *nassir* means victory.

So, we had a list of about a hundred targets of the main Al Qaeda in town. This was a cooperative effort between 1920 Revolution, and we were getting a lot of information from them.

The deal was that they’d get amnesty. If they were foreign fighters, then they would be sent through the system. If they were from the Nimr or another tribe in the city and they were Iraqis, we would offer them some amnesty. [33:50]

We went in and spoke with Sheikh Ibrahim Metanine, who’s not a good guy, and asked him for his support on this. We asked Sheikh Hatim. I called Sheikh Bazee in Jordan and asked him for his overall Dulaymi support. Sheikh Ali Hatem [the Secretary-General of the Dulaymi Confederation] was involved to some degree, I believe. They pledged that no Iraqi would raise any weapon to us during that time.

Knarr: And this you say was February 2007? So not only did you deal with the tribe, you dealt with the confederation of tribes.

Moore: Yes. Our goal was really to start infecting that area and to continually infect it. We thought this was this springboard to Rawah, Hadithah, and Baghdadi. The Marines were doing real well with the Tharwar al-Anbar¹⁴ in Ramadi and Fallujah. But we didn’t want the Tharwar al-Anbar in Hit, because it didn’t fit. When Sattar Albu-Risha came and visited and offered his support, we didn’t want it. We did want, however, their friendship, because Ahmed and Sattar are both pretty amazing guys. They had a lot of wise things they could put out to the young Hikmat and to a young king like Hatim, and they were being successful in Ramadi. Hit’s a smaller place. It’s a smaller town, so it would have been pretty tough for them to come in and work. It needed to be a simpler solution in our area. As we started lessening the ability of insurgents to get their things to Ramadi and Fallujah, I think that it assisted Ramadi and Fallujah, because they didn’t have to deal with more stuff coming in all the time. They actually caught up, and we can see reading their intelligence and their SITREPs [situation report] that they were catching up quickly. The Marines were catching up quick and winning over all support from the people, especially the people against Al Qaeda.

¹⁴ Thawar Al Anbar (TAA) formed in Ramadi with the purpose of removing AQI from Sunni areas in the west.

Knarr: It's interesting that you worked with the 1920 Revolution.

Moore: They were bad. They were the one's shooting at us.

Knarr: I just think it's great you were able to do that. I think that was a hard nut to crack.

Moore: I think that Major Brent Lindeman said if we can't talk to our enemy then we can't have any resolution. Then we'll just all fight and kill each other over and over. And I have to say that there was something that they didn't mind [stopping], and the US Forces didn't mind, the fighting part. We'd been doing that for quite some time. I think that they were sick of it! I remember Sheikh Hikmat breaking down crying in his Diwan and saying, "We're never going to have anything here. There is no future for us at all." I was like, "Well there's got to be some solution. I think that you guys are a part of the solution out here." So, we were always on some kind of patrol and mission. Whatever we did, we did to support them. We never took charge of that area and said, "Okay, we're the Americans." We said, "We're to help you guys. Now if you're doing something illegal, we don't want to be part of it. But if your intentions are good, then we want to support you."

They needed a brave guy that Ibrahim Hamid Jaza at that time, because he was brave, but he was also making deals with Al Qaeda and with 1920th, and with Tharwar al-Anbar. He just wrote so many checks that he just probably couldn't cash them anymore. And he had spent most of his life in prison, too. He said, "I'll go in and clear out the town in two or three days, and I won't even fire a shot." Everyone laughed at him all the time, but it wasn't because he was such a bad MF. It was because he knew how to make deals with people. He would apply some good non-kinetic methods.

Now, when we weren't around, they fought a lot. I don't know everything they did, but you know you would hear gun shots and things going on. I think that they liked to keep us out of their business a little bit. We were always with them. We were constantly in touch with them. After SHURTA NASSIR, General Petraeus, Colonel Clardy, and I think, Colonel Crissman came out. They had no body armor on, and they ate ice cream and walked around down town, which I thought was kind of crazy. It had only been 96 hours since SHURTA NASSIR where both armies surrounded the town. We cleared 400 and some odd buildings. At the end of it, we were driving around with loud speakers saying, "If you're Al Qaeda, come on out." But that amnesty was working. We let the Iraqis be in charge of it. They said they wanted to handle it themselves.

It ended up with a small gun fight south of town with some foreign fighters. They were the only foreign fighters around at that point. A lot of them ran. There was some interesting intelligence coming from the Ramadi area. They ran from Hit to try to get into Ramadi, and there was Sattar Albu-Risha kind of waiting for them. It didn't work out very well for them.

I mean, overall, those are the two main things: the non-kinetic operations and the kinetic busy work of getting the Iraqis motivated. Once the people started seeing those police being successful in the engagements we had with the Al Qaeda, the more successes they had, and the more people saw Al Qaeda as being human and beatable. They also saw American Forces being human and not just oppressors. I think those were the main points out there, just being with the tribes. Sheikh Bazee was a big piece. I really think he was probably a lot more influential than others. He's considered former regime. That's probably why he doesn't come up here anymore. But he has been visited by a lot of people. I think he was consulted a lot on the Tharwar al-Anbar or the Anbar Awakening. [42:36]

Knarr: Now, he moved to Jordan? Where did he go to?

Moore: He still lives in Jordan. I recommend talking to Sheikh Bazee. I have his phone number.

Knarr: I would like that. If you could write his name and phone number down for me, I'd appreciate that.

Moore: I don't think Sheikh Hatim is as important to talk to maybe as Hikmat, but Hatim is important, and so are the grandchildren of Bazee. I think he gives them a lot of guidance. They have kind of been the executors while he's been gone. I can give you those phone numbers, too.

Knarr: Yes, please. So you were in ODA 545 at the time. Who was the Detachment Commander?

Moore: Major Brent Lindeman. He's in the 4th Battalion. He's at SOTF North. I can give you his contact information. [43:09]

Knarr: Great. Is there anything else that you want to add? This is going before the NCO academies, Command and General Staff College, and War College. What do you think they ought to know about your experiences with the tribes, the Desert Protectors, and what did that involve? [44:44]

Moore: I think that one of the keys of success is language. Our detachment always used Arabic. We always used it, and I made all the guys use it all the time. We went to language school for it, so I think it's a critical factor. The surface area with the tribes and the people are everything. It's their area. At any given time, they could have taken any of our lives, especially an ODA. We're too small. Because they wanted us alive, we stayed alive. You know, you just have three cars and you run around with hardly anything. If they didn't want us around, we wouldn't have been around.

The ability for a small element to have civil affairs monies for things like projects was crucial. It gives you some wasta, some worth. We used that. And then I think the ability of our medics [was important]. We pulled a lot of teeth, we gave a lot of shots, and we did a lot of medical care everywhere we went. We never turned anybody down. We never took any second for granted. Everywhere we went, we threw candy or we shot bullets. There was something being reciprocated all the time. If we were getting shot at then we were shooting back. I remember driving across the bridge, and I had the bag of candy. I just wanted to get rid of it, because I was going to eat it. I threw it out, and the kids started throwing rocks back at us.

So I said, okay, so I'm going to try a soccer ball then candy. Pretty soon they stopped throwing the rocks, but they still didn't take the candy. Three months later they were all taking the candy! That was like little indicators here and there.

But, I think language, that ability to utilize civil affairs, and the tribe—the surface area [are all important]. I just saw Sheikh Jubayr Saturday. They had a big dinner for me out there. I work with the ERB [Emergency Response Battalion], the police now. The Iraqis had come and visited and wanted to provide support for the ERB. They invited the ERB to come out, because the ERB is thinking of putting a SWAT-like element out in Ramadi, Fallujah, Qaim, or somewhere. They don't know where, but they know they were going to do it. But it's that surface area, getting with them every single day, so you know what's going on, when something's not quite right, and when things are going better.

Then, I think, not trying to win so much. Sometimes we're accomplishing our mission not by measuring success like a battle you win, but a battle you don't have to fight. Most men aren't really afraid of fighting. It's lawsuits we don't like. We're all a lot alike in that way. I think there was just a lot of the non-kinetic problem-solving and using counselor-like tactics to let the Iraqis identify a problem and come up with a solution for it

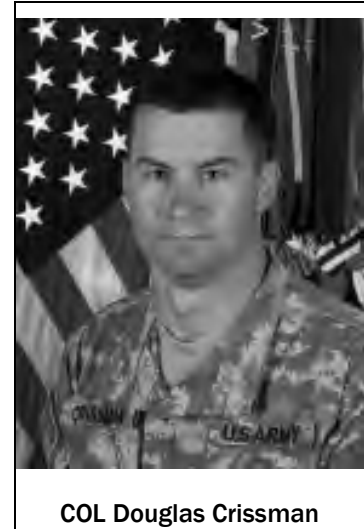
themselves. I think that was really the key, critical piece. If it wasn't for the Iraqis, we would have had nothing!

I was especially thankful that we were working under the Marines out there, because you could tell the Marines really did get it. They really were out there in the dirt all the time.

I think the ability for us not to make them [the Iraqis] hate us, probably was important, too. Making friends and working together, and, especially for an ODA, just being able to report the truth, that's a mission success. You don't have to all be heroes or anything; you just have to report what it is. As I said before, all we tried to do was survive. Most of our operations were based on us trying to survive and making ourselves as important as we could to the tribe and the people and even the units we were there with, 1-36 and 2-7.

Subject: Interview with Colonel Douglas Crissman, former Commander, Task Force 2-7 Infantry

COL Doug Crissman commanded TF 2-7 in Hit from January 2007 to September 2007. The unit was then transferred to Rutbah to finish up its tour, which ended in March 2007. During COL Crissman's time in Hit, Task Force 2-7 launched Operations SHURTA NASIR, which is Arabic for "Police Victory." This four day operation was a joint effort planned and carried out by TF 2-7, the Iraqi Police (IP), Iraqi Army, Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA)-545, and their Iraqi counterparts, the SWA T (Special Weapons and Tactics) team. SHURTA NASIR was an Information Operation (IO) victory that established 3 IP stations in the heart of Hit and emplaced jointly-manned (US and Iraqi) checkpoints controlling access to the city. The operation also rallied citizens to keep their neighborhood free of insurgents. Some identify this operation as the turning point of Hit's awakening.



COL Crissman is currently serving in southern Iraq, responsible for the four southernmost provinces. He was telephonically interviewed on 7 October 2011 by Dr. William Knarr and Mrs. Mary Ryan Conrad from IDA. The following (reviewed on 31 December 2012) is his account of the Awakening in Hit.

Ms. Mary Hawkins: If you could just give us a little bit about your background and when you took command of Task Force 2-7.

COL Doug Crissman: I took command of 2-7 Infantry in June of 2006. I had just left the Joint Staff in the Pentagon for the three years prior to that. I commanded 2-7 for just under 2 years. I think it was 23 months, and for 15 of those months I was deployed to Anbar Province.

COL Tom Graves' unit, 1-36 Infantry, preceded ours in Ramadi. Our brigade came in and replaced his brigade in Ramadi and then each brigade had a detached task force that served in Hit. They were, to my knowledge, the first Army unit that had been in Hit. They were also the first unit that spent more than a short six month tour there. And in fact, for the most part, there had been multiple units. There had been a kind of revolving

door in Hit with a number of different Marine units, but I do believe that 1-36 was the first Army unit and the first one to stay for a longer period of time.

I believe I heard something that General Odierno said about needing some stability in Hit because it is a significant satellite city to Ramadi. The rationale was that we had a bunch of temporary units in there so we really needed to have some continuity. I don't remember exactly what the words were, but I do remember hearing those comments as we were coming in.

We did our PDSS [Pre-deployment Site Survey] and it was just me and my battalion S3. We went in November of 06' and we spent ten days total in Iraq. Only three of those days were in Hit. That's when I had my first experience with that city and the challenges that it was to provide. 1-36 Infantry had lost 14 soldiers in Hit in the previous six months, and so naturally, when we went there in November, the picture that was painted for me was that it wasn't a very happy place. LTC Tom Graves was on his R&R leave so his S3 hosted us for our 3-day visit. Our tour was primarily a physical tour...driving by mostly armored vehicles, pointing and looking out of the vehicle, stopping only at U.S. bases/outposts in the area. No talking to Iraqis. No engaging with any significant Iraqi leadership—tribal, military, or municipal. It was just a bad time. And, of course, it was just a bad time throughout much of Iraq. At no point do I want to cast any aspersions on Tom Graves or 1-36, because they were fighting a different fight and it was a different time. We didn't come in with some magic solution that upon our arrival just changed everything. I think there was some luck and timing involved. [6:25]

We deployed mid-January of 2007, and we were in Anbar until the end of March of 2008. We were in Hit from the 10th of January. I think I landed there on the 31st myself, but most of the battalion was already there. That night, on the 31st of January, we took indirect fire as we were getting the transition brief from Tom Graves and his battalion staff. As we were getting the briefing, we took indirect fire—a mortar attack. And that was my welcome to our new home. Tom Graves had some of his soldiers that were standing by and waiting to be picked up by a helicopter to leave, to fly to Kuwait and begin their transition home. Three of them were wounded that night. None were seriously wounded, but none-the-less, it was their last day. So that's what my guys saw relatively soon after their arrival. But those were the last indirect fire rounds that fell on the FOB [Forward Operating Base] at Hit. We didn't have another attack for the rest of the time that we were there.

Crissman: I don't know what you have heard and what else you may have read; I don't want to cover ground that...

Knarr: Please, we would like you to tell your story, because we get different perspectives from a number of different people. We get it from the Al-Gaoud family and Marty Moore, the ODA that was on the ground. That's how we try to build the picture, with the different perspectives. All of it fits into the storyline and that's what makes it so interesting...the different perspectives.

Crissman: Well, Marty Moore certainly has an interesting perspective that is different from mine. Not because we disagree, but because he was the SF [Special Forces] ODA [Operational Detachment Alpha] team Sergeant for about half of 1-36's time and about half of our time. They were there during Operation SHURTA NASIR. They watched the transition between units. They watched the reaction of the population and they saw things go from worse to better.

Knarr: Yes, he gives SHURTA NASIR high credit for turning around Hit. [11:00]

Crissman: [When I got to Hit and spoke with Tom Graves. I told him that] "as I try to drink from the fire hose [during] the one week that we have here together and as you try to take me everywhere and show me everything, I'm not going to remember it all. But if you would take a moment to consider that if you were here for six more months, knowing what you know now and knowing what you've been through and knowing what you think the Iraqi Security Forces in the immediate area are capable of...make a list of what you think the tribal attitudes are and tell me what you think you would do. Just give me some ideas." And he did. He made a list for six months. He said, "If I were here for six months, here's what I would do and the timeline that I would do it on." It was essentially to leverage the police to gain security in the city, because the police had only recently established one police station in downtown Hit with 1-36's help. They had to literally fight their way in and secure a piece of ground. Then they were holding it and the police were out trying to do their thing, but they were still fighting insurgents every night. As they described it to us, the Iraqi Police could control the city during the day, but the insurgents still operated freely at night.

So, COL Graves said, "Here's what I would do." He made me this list that was things [to do] over the course of the next one to six months. There were several activities. So I got the gist of that. And then as I went around with him, we didn't get to do it on the PDSS, but during our 5-day transition that began on 31 Jan 07, we did meet some of the

local players—Iraqi Security Force leadership, Army and police, and some other religious, tribal, and political notables in the community. They all were kind of tugging on my (the new guy's) sleeve saying, "We think this is what needs to be done." And they were describing different operations. They thought something needed to happen. Apparently it was a compilation of various events and the time was right. They said, "We need to do a clearing operation. We know where all the bad guys are. We know who they are, and we need to do this clearing operation in the city of Hit. We need your help. We can't do it on our own, but we can absolutely do it with your help." [02:47]

So as 1-36 left, I took all of their advice and thoughts and then I took that list from Tom Graves and I went out and started having "the new guy" conversations...along the lines of, "Okay, talk to me, the new guy, about what you are thinking. What were the challenges? Have you tried this before? Or how come you think now is the right time as opposed to three months ago?" In the course of our first few days there, I said it can't get any worse. Things can't be any worse than what I saw in November and what I'm seeing now, so I have nothing to lose. My soldiers are already under a significant amount of danger because I assume the same amount of danger that 1-36 was under. And so doing something offensive with our Iraqi partners is may be stirring the pot a little bit, kicking the hornets' nest a little bit, but it can't get any worse and so why not. It might just get better. Let's give it a try. This is something that the Iraqi's want to do and they are asking for our help. As long as I'm not doing anything illegal or immoral, then it's all in the interest of improved security for both sides, and I'm going to give this a try.

I told them, "Okay, we will do this operation and I'm going to plan it with your input. Here is what we are going to do, and here is what we are not going to do. Here is what I need you to cover down on, and here is what I am going to cover down on. And they said, "Okay, when can we start." I said, "Give me ten days." And that's when they fell over in their chair or whatever they were sitting in. I think they expected that it would take me at least 30 days before I would be ready to do this. And I just said, "Hey, give me ten days." And we started in ten days. We did this four day operation, SHURTA NASIR, and it wasn't pretty. It certainly wasn't a textbook operation by any stretch, but it was contrived by Iraqi and US with us coaching them. They were saying "This is what we think we need to do." And we said, "Okay, here is how we think we ought to do it." We did a huge joint rehearsal. When you brought in that many IA [Iraqi Army] and IP [Iraqi Police] players, the cat was definitely out of the bag. So I don't necessarily think that we achieved surprise. And I do believe a lot of bad guys left the neighborhood be-

cause they may have heard about it, but essentially in those four days and really it was more like three. The fourth day became the march down on the middle of Main Street with me, the mayor, and the chief of police and all that. It kind of gave it a little bit of, you know, “the city is now free and clear and we are going to keep it that way and we need all of your help”—kind of a message. [6:15]

When I then went back and looked at that list of things that Tom Graves gave me that he thought would be prudent and that he would do if he were there another six months...There were about 15 things on that list and it was over a timeline of six months. And SHURTA NASIR allowed us to accomplish many of the things on that list right up front. Much of SHURTA NASIR’s success was based on the foundation that Tom Graves and 1-36 IN laid for us that allowed us to have something to step on as we came in.

Hawkins: Sir, you said you asked the Iraqi’s why the operation should be planned then...why not three months ago? What was their response?

Crissman: Some of it was that they had been asking for a few months, and they had not gotten the response that they wanted. Again, it was a different fight for 1-36, but I believe that they were, quite honestly, skeptical about some of the people who were asking them for help – and probably rightly so. Remember, this was a time when all throughout Iraq and in Anbar, people had been shooting at us months or years before they had finally gotten tired of fighting Al Qaeda and decided to side with us against Al Qaeda as a part of the Awakening movement. This was prior to the Awakening movement really gaining nationwide momentum. Nobody had heard that word yet outside Anbar – and really not much outside Ramadi. And so there were some shady characters that were coming up and yanking on my sleeve. Tom Graves was like, “Yeah, I’m not sure that I trust that guy. So when he says that he wants to partner with you and do an operation and he know where the bad guys live, I don’t know. He’s a bad guy himself, so I don’t know.” So I think Tom was just very skeptical and cautious and when they proposed this operation to him, he wasn’t ready to commit.

I just said, “What could it hurt? It can’t get any worse around here.” And so all I gotta do is be on my guard while I’m partnering with this guy to make sure that he doesn’t shoot me in the back. But other than that, if he’s willing to help me find some bad guys or force them out of the city and establish an Iraqi Security Force presence downtown and he’s doing so with guys with guns wearing police uniforms and some of them happen to

be former criminals...you know, at this point, I can't do any better. [9:55] So let me enlist their support and build their trust. I just looked a bunch of guys in the eye and said, "You guys understand that I'm putting a tremendous amount of trust in you." I spoke to my new boss (Marine Colonel Stacy Clardy) operating out of Al Asad, 100 Kilometers away, and he said, "What? You want to do what? Are you sure?" He gave me a lot of faith and trust to give it a try that early in our tour. And, again, my argument was that I don't pretend to have anything figured out here. I just figure it can't get any worse, so why don't you let me pull this off and give me some support? And he did.

Hawkins: Sir, did you get any assurance from the fact that Sattar had announced the Awakening and a lot of people in the city of Ramadi had been joining it and fighting against AQI several months before this operation occurred?

Crissman: I hadn't really heard that term yet. It wasn't being kicked around as this new thing.

Hawkins: When did you start hearing about it?

Crissman: I think it got to us some time around April. Honestly, the Marines didn't really believe in it and were very reluctant to support it initially. The Marines owned Anbar Province (Multi-National Force-West). My higher headquarters was a Marine Colonel, and our boss, of course, was a Marine Major General. As you know, the Awakening concept came from Sheik Sattar in Ramadi, but was supported and championed by an Army Colonel in Ramadi (COL Sean McFarland) and was then handed off to another Army Colonel who was my indirect boss (COL John Charlton). The first two cities in Anbar that "turned" were Ramadi and Hit, and ironically, they both led by Army units. Following SHURTA NASIR, we were putting police that weren't really "official" police in police uniforms. We ran a 10-day "Police Academy" on our base (FOB Hit) and gave them some basic skills. We fingerprinted them and did the retinal scanning and attempted to vet them all, but clearly there were some people that had been enemies of the United States months or years before, and we were putting them in a police uniform and joining together with them to fight Al Qaeda. It was clearly not without risks, but it was working. The Marines were very skeptical of that at first. It wasn't until BrigGen Allen (one of the two Marine deputy commanders of MNF-W) got behind it and got some of the Marines interested in it that it began to get some notoriety and traction, I believe. Suffice it to say that I had plenty of long conversations with my Marine Corps boss (and his staff) to try to convince them that what I was doing was not going to result in bad things down the road. [3:20]

Hawkins: How did the population in Hit react to SHURTA NASIR? Was it an information operations victory and how so?

Crissman: It absolutely was an IO victory in, arguably, the most dangerous province in Iraq at the time and in one of the key cities in that dangerous province. Also, it was a key satellite city of Ramadi, which was regarded as one of the most dangerous cities in the world at that time. So it absolutely was an IO victory. Within a couple of weeks of the end of SHURTA NASIR, we had GEN Petraeus come. We, the United States, needed some IO victories in Anbar and this was a positive one that was on local pan-Arab media. GEN Petraeus came, and we did another walk through the main street (RTE CHERRY) — even walked through the now-crowded Hit market—where he joined us wearing a soft cap, not Kevlar. It was us basically saying, “We, with our Iraqi partners, have taken the city back. And it’s now up to you all to keep it this way.” I definitely think it was an IO victory.

Hawkins: From what I’ve read, there really were very few insurgents killed or captured, but things really turned around. [5:07]

Crissman: Yeah, again, I wish I could say that it was some carefully contrived plan that we came up with and that we came in, very deliberately, and executed it. And that it went exactly the way we wanted. And I wish I could say that we killed these guys or we captured these guys, but we really just went in and secured terrain. We took the city and we went after some guys. We believed we chased a bunch of folks out of the city and we also believe that through our actions a lot of folks ran on their own. And then, because of the check points that we put in around the city, jointly manned with US and IP, they were unable to get back into the city. Or at least it was harder. At the very least, our efforts and follow-through certainly made it more difficult for insurgents to have freedom of maneuver/action. I think if nothing else, the whole notion of clear, hold, and build, we attempted to apply that COIN principle of saying, “First we’ve got to go in and clear the city. How will we do that?” Well, that’s where Marty and his team [came in]. I enlisted their support. I said, “Okay, look, if what you guys are saying is this and what Tom Graves told me is this, and what the Iraqi’s are telling me is this and my gut tells me to do this, we’ll put it all right into a blender.” I said, “Alright, let’s do this operation. We will go in the middle of the night. We’ll help them secure a bunch of police stations. Well, where should we put them? Let’s put one here and another one here, because they are far enough apart from one another, but they are still mutually supporting. They are in the bad places of town. We need to put one over here, because it gives us access to the

bridge. We need to put one over here, because it gives us access to this key entrance to the city, and we can wall it off very easily. We need to put a little police station annex in the hospital because the insurgents kept going to the hospital to treat their wounded, so no one will go and get normal care.”

The hospital was a disaster so we needed to fix that. So we chose our locations based on the end state that we needed to go after and what degree of security that would provide us for the basic infrastructure of the town. I used Marty and his folks and asked them where we should go and what building works...what building should we take to set up a police station that would give us a good defensible terrain? [We needed] a place that we could build a courtyard and maybe we could put some concrete barriers out there to secure ourselves. Maybe it would be a multi-story building so we could put some snipers on roof and then eventually put sandbag positions up there for IP. We thought through all of that with their input for sure. [8:03]

Hawkins: So, I know I’m skipping ahead here, but I’m so curious about this. You left Hit for Rutbah before your tour was over, right?

Crissman: Rutbah, yeah.

Hawkins: How did that happen? Did they say that Hit was secure and they wanted you to move on and do the same thing in Rutbah?

Crissman: Well, that’s, of course, what I told all of my soldiers, but that was not the case. I believe that our Marine chain-of-command said, “Okay, we are done. We think that there are some different things that we need to do in Hit, and we want a light infantry Marine battalion to go in there and do those things. And we want to send you—the Army guys with tanks, Bradleys, mechanized capabilities, and the ability to support yourself logistically.” I had the ability to handle that mission better than some of the Marine light infantry battalions. And so that was the way they sold it to me. “We need to send you out there because you and your equipment are better suited for that terrain and that mission and here is what we want you to do, so go do that.”

I didn’t think that was a good idea. I argued against the move. It was delayed once and that bought us 2 more months, but then sometime around August we finally got the order to move. Our transition date with LtCol J.J. Dill and his 1-7 Marines was 7 September, I believe. I believe that the Marines wanted me to do some things that I thought would be counterproductive. They wanted me to go back to some more heavy-handed tactics. They felt that it was too permissive of an environment and that the security was not sta-

ble. And they wanted me to do some things that I disagreed with...kind of about what was necessary for the future of Hit. And I think that they got tired of me dragging my feet or recommending against what needed to be done. And so I think that that was part of their decision to put a new team in there.

So, I didn't agree with the Marines on what needed to be done and therefore, I think they got tired of that and I think that was also partially the reason that we moved out to Rutbah. And we did employ some of our tactics out there. I think we had some success out there that wasn't quite as notorious, because Rutbah and the surrounding terrain just wasn't as crucial to the big picture for Ramadi – designated one of the 7 key cities in Iraq. It's an interesting area in and of itself, but not quite as interesting to everybody as Hit was at that time.

Hawkins: So, would you consider Hit secure or stable after SHURTA NASIR?

Crissman: I would consider it to be stable. Surely not secure. I'm not even sure that we could call Iraq secure today. So, stable is probably fair. I guess the easiest thing is to say that it was better. From what I saw when we arrived and what was possible within days of SHURTA NASIR was a city that was coming back to life.

I've believed this all along, and I've used this here in Iraq today—only one percent of the population of Iraq is bad or a part of the problem and the other 99% is good. They want the same things that we want in America. You know, they want a stable environment where their kids can walk to school safely without the threat of being injured or killed. They want jobs. They want basic services. They want all those things. So, as you counter an insurgency, you can't alienate yourself to the 99% of the population that's good while you are going after the 1% that is bad. So you have to establish the respect and trust of the 99% and convince them that you are there to help. You are not there as an occupier, you are not there for their oil, and you are not there for their land. You are not there for any other purpose than to help establish stability. Once you can convince them of that and earn their trust and respect—which is best done with Iraqi security forces to help you—then you have them help you go against the 1%. I believe that we as an Army may have missed that boat early on in this conflict. [17:43] Or just by virtue of the circumstances that we were facing as we tried to go after the 1% in the early years of the war. We alienated portions of that 99% and then we did some other things that helped alienate other portions of the population like deba'athification and other things. But all those things together created a larger wedge of the population that was at the very least

neutral to US and maybe anti-US. So as we came back in, I said, "Okay, I've got members of the population, whether they were religious, municipal government, or Iraqi Security Force leaders, and they were all telling me that we need to do this operation. Well, they live here, and I don't so let's give this a try.

Hawkins: So how did individuals within the Albu-Nimr tribe help or harm the situation?

Crissman: Well, the Albu-Nimr tribe was the significant tribal player there in Hit. A majority of the tribal leadership lived on the other side of the Euphrates, on the eastern side.

Sheikh Hikmat was the mayor. He was clearly a business man. He spoke English fairly well. We certainly befriended him. Through his connections as a mayor, sheikh, and contractor, he got rich on Coalition forces, for sure. It was a small price to pay because he was tribally influential, and he was a reasonable leader who was willing to take over as a mayor and try to make some sense out of what was going on in terms of a municipal organization. He could help us get things done. [20:15]

Sheikh Hatim was what we called the "boy sheikh." He was sheikh, because the father had passed the premier sheikh [position to him]. He didn't have the reputation or the clout that Sheikh Hikmat had but he was the rightful premier sheikh. He didn't want to roll up his sleeves and get dirty and work with the mayor and get involved with the drama of Hit. He just wanted the money. He just wanted opportunities that came from having good relationships with the Americans.

Sheikh Jubayr was the uncle of Sheikh Hikmat and was sort of the elder statesman. He had diabetes, smoked cigarettes constantly, and kind of had one foot in the grave, but he was a wise old man whom I befriended and had many a long conversations with. I would often ask his advice. I can't say that I always went with it, but I would often ask his advice. I believe that he is the kind of guy that if you build trust and respect for and he says you are a good guy then it would open some other doors for you. Sheikh Jubayr helped us with some of that.

Sheikh Bezi was in Jordan. I talked to him on the phone a few times, because Sheikh Hikmat would call him. Sheikh Bezi basically pledged his support, financially, for anything that we needed. Of course, I wouldn't ask him for money, but I would say, "Hey, we really need your help at the tribal level to make sure that everyone understands the importance of coming together and supporting some of these ISF hiring drives that we are doing so we can get a better cross section of the tribes in uniform." So he was inter-

esting. I never met him, but I talked to him on the phone. Is that all? Was there one more?

Hawkins: How about General Hamid [Ibrahim Hamid Jaza] I guess you met him soon after you got to Hit?

Crissman: Yeah, I probably met him on the second or third day. It was one late night conversation over at the Hit district police station on the east side of the Euphrates. Right after we transitioned with 1-36 and it became our fight, I can remember distinctly that night going over there and talking until midnight in a smoke filled room with all of these various folks. General Hamid and I went back and forth on what needed to be done and what he thought was possible. He was the man who would carry a big stick and take on AQ, but he was uneducated. He was part of the warrior class, not any kind of upper class or elite sheikh by any stretch. One of his sons was beheaded by AQ on a soccer field in Hit. He was the right guy to lead the fight against them. We could not have done what we did in Hit without him. [24:44]

Knarr: One of the things that we are trying to get to the root of is about the Desert Protectors. They started in Al Qaim in August/September of 2005. But that seemed to be the last surge of taking the Albu-Mahal and bringing them into the Desert Protectors and then later bringing them in as Iraqi Police (IP) and part of the Army. Marty did talk about Desert Protectors in Hit. But I'm trying to find out if that was a legitimate movement or if they just simply took the name "Desert Protectors" and adopted that for anyone that they brought in from the tribes as IPs and Army later. Did you track with the Desert Protectors at all when you were there?

Crissman: No, we didn't, but I know I heard the term. I don't know for certain, but I believe it was what you described. They were a group that they would lump under that term. They were folks who were willing to stand up and join the Americans in fighting AQ. And so they were, potentially, the beginnings of what later became a much larger movement. But it was years before as opposed to weeks before where someone stole the name and changed it or something. The Awakening was the tribes, joining, entire tribes, like neighborhoods and sections at a time, that would turn because of the tribal leaders that would agree to join forces and say, "Okay, yeah, we are tired of AQ ruining it for us, so we are going to join together." The Desert Protectors were more individuals. It was kind of like an all star team of multiple folks who wanted to fight AQ. But, again, that is just my guess. We didn't really play with that term.

Hawkins: Sir, are you familiar with the SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics] team? I think Marty Moore told us that the original Desert Protectors turned into SWAT. For a while they were put into the IA. They were the scouts of the IA, but because there were so many Shia in the IA, eventually the ODA lobbied to get them into their own group, and they called it SWAT. Does that track with you? [30:59]

Crissman: Yes. I think that makes perfect sense. We dealt with the IP SWAT. They were really the partnered force that the ODA took with them everywhere. They always went together. On the first night of SHURTA NASIR, when I went into the city and we took over the first building with Marty and his guys, we spent the night in this apartment building that was about three stories high. We chose it because it offered a good view and was defensible. The IP SWAT team kicked in the first doors. It was mostly families living there, but we just made sure it was all clear and left the families there, but wouldn't let them leave. We went up on the third floor and spent the night. It was IP SWAT that secured us that first night of SHURTA NASIR.

Hawkins: Just a minute ago, you defined the Awakening. You said it was when neighborhoods and whole tribes joined together to fight AQ. Do people associate Hit with having its own Awakening in which this occurred? I know in the north of Hit early on in the war, the Albu-Nimr tribe convinced a lot of its population to join Coalition forces, and specifically they helped out the ODA. But what about other tribes, like in the downtown area where there are few Albu-Nimr?

Crissman: I don't think that Hit had its own Awakening movement necessarily. It clearly started in Ramadi with Shiekh Albu-Risha and his brother. I met them both. I met Sheikh Albu-Risha in May 2007 before he was assassinated. I met with him at the Albu-Nimr tribal compound on the other side of the river from Hit with Sheikh Hikmat, Sheikh Hatim, and Sheikh Jubayr all present. I do believe there were some conversations with Colonel Hamid [later, General Hamid]. He said, "Hey, I'm working with Sheikh Albu-Risha."

So this whole island hopping campaign that I was joking about...in the first night, we went in and secured three police stations and the hospital and then fortified them. When the sun came up, we had three police stations established and the hospital was secure. We just held it, and did targeted operations for three days and then the whole while we were putting a blockade around the outside of the city. The next week Colonel Hamid said "Now everyone in Hit is happy and the word is spread. We need to go do a similar

operation in Mohammedi.” It’s a town of about 5,000. It was just to the south of Hit. So he would say, “Hey, let’s do this.” And then next thing you know is that he is already down there and he has secured his own police station. He was calling us saying, “I’ve got the police station secure. I didn’t need your help to do that, but now I need your help with all of your heavy equipment. I want to put sandbags in. I want to put concrete around it. I want to fortify this position that I just took over.” [35:45]

Then the next week, we jumped to Abu Tiban, which is actually a suburb of Ramadi. We literally did this island hopping campaign: going out and establishing a police station, fortifying it, putting a U.S. presence there, spreading our little pockets of security, and then putting check points out around these various police stations that were police volunteers. I started calling them neighborhood watches because my Marine Colonel was saying, “What in the hell are you doing? These guys aren’t official police. You are putting guns in the hands of guys that we know nothing about and you’re arming these people.” I said, “I’m not arming them. I’m just allowing them to take their AK-47 and their one magazine of ammunition that they are allowed to have at home and go to work.” We were putting a road guard vest or a reflective belt on them and saying, “Here. If you will stay out here 24 hours a day or work some rotation with your buddy. Nobody knows that you only have three bullets in that magazine. Just stand out here and look mean, and we can have a much better coverage of secure area than I can. I can’t do it with all of my soldiers.” That whole concept was not well received by my Marine chain-of-command. My boss said, “What are you doing?” I said that it is sort of like having a neighborhood watch. It’s by the citizens who live there who are tired of AQ messing with them. So here is what I want to do. It was tough convincing them of that. I know I got off of the subject a little bit, but that is how the Hit Awakening started. It was much less formal or even much less methodical than the Ramadi version, but it was toward the same goal. We really just enabled the Iraqis to spread the movement through our support.

Knarr: Do you think that this meeting that Hamid had with Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha was a morale builder? That Hamid realized what happened in Ramadi and now it’s time for us to go forward and do the same thing here? Was it more than any type of financial or funding that Sheikh Sattar might have provided? [38:30]

Crissman: Yeah, I think they knew it was working in Ramadi, and that they were asking for their help. Sheikh Sattar was a respected man, so they felt they should give it a try. And their American partners were not saying no. In some cases, I didn’t say yes, but it kind of had the approach that it couldn’t get any worse. So, I kind of let some things happen

on their own with the thought of, “if I can get Iraqis to secure themselves or if I can get them to establish something that looks much more like security than what I have right now, then it’s better for me even if I have to then go in and partner with those guys and clean up the mess they made, professionalize the police station that they established, and then figure out a way to get them vetted and legitimately paid by their own government.” That is far easier for me to do than trying to do it all myself. I wouldn’t have known what building to go in to. I wouldn’t have known which towns needed to be secured first. I wouldn’t have known who to appoint as the neighborhood watch chiefs. But in many cases, it was folks who had been police men before. They had Army experience and Hamid knew a lot of those folks. I don’t know exactly whether Sattar Albu-Risha asked him to be a partner and help him spread this movement. I suspect he did. But I think Albu-Risha was looking more for tribal connections and wasn’t necessarily getting them from Albu-Nimr who had their own relationship with the Americans like Mary said. And we were doing quite well financially because they had been friendly to the Americans and may have been a little skeptical of a partnership that might put that relationship in jeopardy, whereas Hamid didn’t necessarily have that relationship.

Knarr: I think that is an incredible story of how you and your unit turned that around.

Crissman: Like I said, lots of people deserve a lot of credit. We walked into an opportunity that was provided to us by the efforts of a lot of others that came before us and a lot of conditions that happened. All the planets, I think, lined up and we maybe just allowed an opportunity to occur.

Knarr: Given that, you took an important step.

Crissman: Yeah, we definitely took a step. I definitely had plenty of folks asking me whether or not it was wise to take that step. [41:41]

Knarr: I believe COL McFarland encountered some similar incidents. So did Tony Dean.

Crissman: McFarland has some interesting stories. Did you talk to his successor, John Charlton?

Knarr: Yes, we did talk to him. There was some good continuity between the two of them. The conditions were so different when they went in, but both of them took charge and worked with them. It worked out well.

Crissman: We spent a lot of money. We didn’t spend a lot in Hit, but they spent billions or at least millions in Ramadi. But it became a bit of an example for the rest of Iraq. We

didn't just "clear". We haven't just successfully held. We are now going to spend millions to pay Iraqis to start rebuilding. Within a year or 15 months they made a lot of progress in Ramadi.

Knarr: Yeah, they did. It's a great story.

Hawkins: The Hit district includes the western portion, which you referred to as downtown Hit and the east has Al Phurat and Hai al Bakr, but is this all considered the Hit district?

Crissman: Yes. Mostly when you refer to a district, it's for police districting, like a precinct, so an area of responsibility for a police district. So, the Hit district includes quite a bit. Hit district went out to and included the western town of Kubaysa, well out west. It went up north, just south of Baghdadi. It went east across the river and included Hai al Bkr, Al Phurat, and Zuwayyah. That's where Sheikh Hatim, Sheik Hikmat, and Sheikh Jubayr's tribal compound was.

Hawkins: Did it include Mohammadi?

Crissman: Yes. So, General Hamid was the Hit district police chief and was therefore responsible for this entire area. We were working with police chiefs of the city underneath the Hit district. And before we left, we helped build a professional police station which was actually in the city of Hit as opposed to across the river in Hai al Bkr, which became the new Hit district headquarters. [45:19]

Hawkins: So did it go as far south down to Abu Tiban?

Crissman: That's where the border got fuzzy. Most would say that Abu Tiban was in the Ramadi district for police, but it was far enough outside of the urban sprawl of Ramadi that it didn't get much attention. So they came to us because Hit was much smaller than Ramadi. We kind of adopted Abu Tiban. LTC Mike Silverman, who was the battalion commander of 3-69 Armor, had the responsibility for that area as it went into Ramadi, and I had the responsibility for the area as it went closer to Hit. So we had a fuzzy border between us. There was a line on the ground somewhere, but we worked together.

Hawkins: So that last area that was cleared, the Route Cherry and the Route Maverick area, just west of the Euphrates, that is considered the city of Hit?

Crissman: Yes. The city of Hit is on the western side of the Euphrates and it's kind of at the intersection of MSR Bronze, which runs north/south, along the river. I forget the name of the road that goes out towards Kubaysa, but there is a key four-way traffic circle intersection. So Hit itself was there on the west side of the river. It may be urban legend,

but allegedly the world's oldest minaret is in the city of Hit and was right by one of the positions where I had a platoon that lived for about our first three months there, overlooking and securing the bridge. And it's where a pretty significant fight took place with 1-36 where one of their lieutenants was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. I want to say that his name was Lieutenant Jackson.¹⁵

Hawkins: Is there anything that we didn't ask you that we should have?

Crissman: Probably. I have four provinces of Iraq that I am responsible for now, so this has actually gotten a bit foggy over time. I probably have left out a detail or two that would be very interesting to you. What we talked about mostly was the February/March timeframe. As you get into April and May, it really gets interesting as we continued the island hopping campaign and continued trying to convince my chain-of-command to allow some things to happen that people weren't really comfortable with. I got more comfortable because SIGACTS [Significant Actions] or attacks on US went down significantly and stayed down. Everybody was wondering what did you guys do? What is your secret, you know? I tried to explain to some folks what we were doing and so this spread.

And the end of May is when we had to clip Hamid's wings, and we had to take him down that day when we had not intended to. I had some thoughts. I knew he wasn't the poster child for police chiefs. I knew he was doing some things that weren't necessarily by the book, but we did not condone any of them. We did not participate in any of them, and we didn't turn a blind eye. All I could speak for was the time since February that we were together. So some things started to develop. We eventually decided that enough was enough and that he was doing more harm than good and ended up detaining him near the end of May 2007. Then about a month later, we were able to put in an Albu-Nimr, former IA Colonel, who we deputized and forced into the system and tried to get official buy in. He added some professionalism to the police force. He was well respected.

Hawkins: Was that Salah Rashid?

¹⁵ First Lieutenant Walter B. Jackson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on 2 November 2007 for his heroic actions on 27 September 2006. while serving as a company fire support officer with company A, Task Force 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. J.D.Leipold, Lieutenant Receives Distinguished Service Cross, accessed from the Official Homepage of the Army at <http://www.army.mil/article/5921/lieutenant-awarded-distinguished-service-cross/> on 2 September 2012.

Crissman: Yeah, yes. Colonel Salah.

Hawkins: I didn't know he was Albu-Nimr.

Crissman: Yeah. It was Albu-Nimr that recommended him to me, and I remember talking to Sheikh Jubayr about him. I had to talk to multiple people before I decided to put someone in behind Hamid, but we had a vacuum there, and I had to fill it reasonably quickly otherwise, we would lose all the gains that we made. That was an interesting day.

Later in 2007, the 3rd ID came in during the Surge and established another headquarters in the Baghdad belts, south of Baghdad. They did this Sons of Iraq program where essentially they were doing the exact same thing that I had been doing with the neighborhood watch program. But they got energy behind it and were allowed to pay these folks \$300 a month, whereas I was literally taking scrap metal and wood off of my FOB, allowing the Iraqi Police to sell it themselves downtown, and then use the profits to make improvements to their Police Stations and pay their "neighborhood watch" folks. It was pennies on the dollar compared to the \$300 per month salary that they were getting working with the 3rd ID south of Baghdad. But I couldn't get my chain of command to embrace it the way others did. [58:24]

I was kind of hoping that I was going to get a chance to go back to Hit at some point before I leave this time and go see how many of the folks that we either put into office, put into position, or worked with are still around in positions there in Hit.

Knarr: We had a chance to go see Bezi in Jordan. We sat down and talked to him for a while...and Numan al-Gaoud.

Crissman: Oh, good. I've never met him.

Knarr: Yes, so we had a chance to talk to him.

When this is done, Mary will send you something on the final report so you can see how we saw all of this fit together from the different transcripts and everything else that people have been so kind in spending their time and telling us the story.

Crissman: Yeah, well it's definitely interesting. Of course, we have a whole other story being told over here right now. This tour has been interesting with four provinces and Sadr's influence and Iran's role and trying to figure out how to get out of here gracefully, responsibly, and honorably and yet leaving the Iraqis to fend for themselves in certain areas. Interesting stuff.

Knarr: The exit has got to be the hardest because you start disconnecting yourself from the people and you kind of lose your eyes. My hat is off to you for taking on probably one of the hardest jobs there is in trying to move out of a country.

Crissman: Yeah, We are at the bottom of the funnel as units withdraw to Kuwait, so we'll be the last guys out as everybody else passes through us on their way out. Then we'll follow in behind them and close the door.

Knarr: I certainly appreciate your time. This really is one of the keys and it certainly shows the uniqueness of what you guys did over there. You've helped us fill in the gaps as we scratched our head and said, "What about Hit?" Mary, do you have anything else?

Hawkins: The way the story about you and General Hamid ended is amazing. Is Michael Yon's account of that pretty close to what happened?¹⁶ [1:02:12]

Crissman: Yeah, it is actually. He just happened to be with us. He spent about ten days with us. Most of that time he was out with my companies. On this particular day, he just happened to hop into the vehicle with me as we left downtown Hit, and we were going around checking on different things. We visited the Albu-Nimr tribal compound and then we were on our way back up when the whole incident preceding his detention began to unfold. So, it was just an interesting day.

Hawkins: Thank you. You have been extremely helpful. We really appreciate you taking the time to speak with us.

¹⁶ Michael Yon's article, "The Final Option," can be found at <http://www.michaelyon-online.com/the-final-option.htm>, accessed on 7 October 2011.

Appendix B: Iraqi Perspectives

Notes on conventions used in the transcripts

- Ranks. The first time a service member is identified, their rank is spelled out; subsequently, their rank is abbreviated in accordance with their service affiliation. Ranks are spelled out in the footnotes.
- Time “hacks” on transcripts correspond to video so they can be used to identify areas to use as clips for the movie, the DVD and for further research into specific areas.
- For al- or Al- or Al in a proper name: When “al” is in the middle of the name, in a last name, for example, it should be lower case with a hyphen, such as Nuri al-Maliki. If the name is by itself then the “al” is capitalized, as in Al-Maliki.

The majority of tribal names begin with the term *albu*, a formal characterization of *the*. When the tribal name is included in an individual’s name, the prefix “al-” is added and the tribal name changes slightly, usually with the addition of *awi* or *i* at the end. For example, Albu-Risha becomes al-Rishawi and al-Assafi denotes a member of the Assaf tribe or Albu-Assaf.

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Subject: Interview with Sheikh Sa'id, Al-Jughayfi tribe, Hadithah, Iraq

Sheikh Sa'id [pronounced Si'ed with a long i and e] is the principal leader of the most prominent tribe in Hadithah, the Al-Jughayfi tribe. Sheikh Sa'id was in Hadithah during the invasion in 2003 and has remained there to the present. Although he worked with the Coalition when it arrived, he defended the right of the Iraqi's to resist the Coalition's occupation. He remained on the side-lines of the insurgency until Al Qaeda started killing innocent Iraqis. According to him, he recruited Colonel Farouq as the Iraqi Police (IP) chief and supported the training and development of Hadithah IPs.



Sheikh Sa'id,
Al-Jughayfi tribe

He claimed the Sahawa occurred in Hadithah before Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha developed it in Ramadi. He was visibly concerned about the turn of the Sahawa as it was originally conceived by Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha to secure Al Anbar to an organization run by Sheikh Ahmed Abu-Risha, who headed the organization after Sattar's assassination, of crooks and thieves who pursued money for their own gain.

He was extremely frustrated that the Americans brought democracy to Iraq and then would not enforce the vote of the people in March 2010 that elected the Allawi party. He was also very frustrated that the people who helped oust Al Qaeda and made the Sahawa successful were being ignored in the development of the government—others who fled Iraq or had no hand in defeating terrorism were given positions of power within the government.

Sheikh Sa'id Al-Jughayfi was interviewed at his home in Hadithah by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC. An interpreter was used for the interview. The following is Sheikh Sa'id's account of events in Hadithah.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Please provide your background—where were you born; how long have you lived in Hadithah?

Sheikh Sa'id Al-Jughayfi: I was born in Hadithah, but we lived until 1979 in a village called Anah Susah [ph] located 36 kilometers from Haditha and then moved back to Hadithah.

Knarr: You were here when the Coalition came?

Sa'id: Yes.

Knarr: What were your thoughts when the Coalition arrived?

Sa'id: I worked with the Americans since the first day they arrived.

Knarr: What happened, why did the resistance start?

Sa'id: It is obvious, when you [the Coalition] occupy a country, the country has a right to resist, and the resistance showed up. We stayed quiet until the resistance changed.

Knarr: How?

Sa'id: Al Qaeda turned against the citizens.

Knarr: When did Al Qaeda come? When did the foreign fighters come?

Sa'id: Late 2005 they started, and they controlled the area. We were watching. We could not do anything. They killed people. For this reason, I did not accept them. So I talked with some of the former leaders from the Hadithah military. I asked them for one person who could represent the Iraqi Police (IP) here in Hadithah, but they refused.

Then I went to Shirqat [a district and town located in Salah ad-Din Province]. I contacted Colonel Farouq, and I asked him, "Can you come to Hadithah and become the IP leader here?" He accepted the offer, and he brought about 150 men with him. It took six-to-seven months back and forth to Shirqat to train the people. Then I called Lieutenant Colonel the [Coalition] commander in Hadithah. I suggested, "I want to establish the Iraqi Police, but I want you to be in charge of them." He accepted the offer and we brought those new IPs from Shirqat to Hadithah.

During the day we sat and did nothing, but at night we conducted assaults and raids. We started catching Al Qaeda members. When we caught them we sent them to Baghdad. Then from Baghdad we sent them to Bucca. We've been fighting Al Qaeda, but the casualties weren't bad. [4:58]

In 2006, we controlled the situation here in Hadithah. After we controlled the security situation, I brought this mayor [Mayor Hakim] here, and the Americans stayed in charge. We also created a City Council. I then contacted the judge so they could establish and work the laws, so all the administration was active again.

And now Hadithah has become a quiet and normal city. After that, Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha established the Sahawa in Anbar. But the security was already established in Hadithah and Al Qaim. After Abu-Risha declared the Sahawa, I communicated with him. We agreed to fight Al Qaeda and the terrorists together. We met three times. We kept working the Sahawa in Al Anbar, but we created the Sahawa [here in Hadithah] before Anbar. We helped and liberated Anbar with Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha.

After he died, Ahmed took over. But Ahmed kicked out the guys who had sacrificed to establish the Sahawa. After that, we cut relations with him. We don't even say Salam, say hello. So this is just my opinion, but Hadithah is still secure and safe.

The American command made a big mistake about the Sahawa. They didn't recruit for the government those who established and founded the Sahawa. [8:50] They abandoned them.

An example, all of Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha's [supporters], all of them, they're all outside [the government]. Now the local government in Anbar and everybody says they belong to Ahmed, his brother. But those tribes were like founders; they established the Sahawa. Ahmed sent them away. So, Sahawa now is just a name. We don't have any role, but we keep working. We have the same goals, and we have the same target. After we worked to establish security, the government thinks we are traitors, because we established the Sahawa. We don't have any opinions, no consolation, so we sit here.

You see Hadithah's administration here? I've never been there. There are a lot of negative points, but this is what happened after we took over the new security. And this is it; you can see it written in English. Everything is written here [Sheikh Sa'id is showing me a paper that he had typed for us to provide to the Coalition Forces]. This government, from Baghdad to the local government, kicked out those who established the Sahawa.

Knarr: And you sent this to US Forces?

Sa'id: I just typed it yesterday, and I am going to give it to you.

Knarr: Oh, you're going to give it to me? Thank you!

Col Dale Alford, USMC: You know you're not the first to tell us that the ones that really stood up are now getting shit-canned. We've heard that many who went to Jordan or to Syria are now coming back and acting like they were part of it. [13:12]

Sa'id: Yes, exactly! I have a comment, a small comment to make. About the election, we went, we voted, and we thought it was democracy [he is speaking of the election in March 2010 where Allawi's party won by one vote]. We are still waiting. And now we are sacrificing, because those parties are fighting each other; the fight is between Sunni and Shia, and we are the victims.

You occupy the country, and you are in charge of the Iraqi people. It's the responsibility of the United States. At least 300 families now are killed by explosions. And no Iraqi leaders from the government were killed, just innocent families. Where are the human rights? You established the human rights in the entire world; where are the human right here in Iraq? The Security Council, where is it? We are human, too. We are victims, because those parties are fighting each other. In Iraqi it's like a ring on your finger. You can flip flop the thing in 24 hours [you, the Coalition, can immediately change the situation], or we stay like this in this shit. So, we want you to review the whole Iraqi fight. We are a population. We are humans with no human rights. The Americans, they don't care. They didn't ask why these people innocently died. They fight: Maliki with Allawi and Sunni with Shia. They fight, but we are the victims. We did nothing wrong. All those Iraqi leaders have stolen all of the money, and they send it away overseas. [16:42]

If the Americans are willing to help the Iraqi people, then they need to change everything. If the situation stays the same, maybe the people are going to fight the Americans again. You have to pay attention to this point! If the situation stays the same, the people are going to be against the United States. You know the Iraqi people are one. We don't have differences between Sunni and Shia. We need someone to help us. And I think the Americans, they can pick the right person for the country.

Knarr: You want the United States to pick a person to run the country?

Sa'id: I don't have further comment. I think I'm clear.

The main thing for me now is to change the head of the local administration here. I want you to change Mayor Hakim who talked to you this morning. They're a bunch of thieves. You need to change them. They steal property and people's money. You gave the security fight to the government, and then you left.

Knarr: What were some of the mistakes made at the beginning in 2004 and 2005? What went wrong and how can we learn from them?

Sa'id: I cannot clarify this point. I don't know. I cannot explain your government.

Knarr: Well, we brought units in and we took units out. When Fallujah happened, we took units out. Do we think that created a situation for the foreign fighters to come in to Hadithah? [21:27]

Nephew [Sheikh Sa'id was finished talking, his nephew, a lawyer, spoke English and continued the dialogue]: Your government started in 2003 and 2004. The main mission was the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, and you succeeded. But you gave us democracy for the first time. Our population lived under oppression for 35 years under Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. This was not easy for us to understand democracy like American democracy in one or two years. You put it in our hands, for our own to corrupt, to take the power to protect our relatives and use it for other things [than for what it was intended]. Then Al Qaeda entered, and began to kill the citizens and...

Knarr: When did they come?

Nephew: My Uncle Sheikh Sa'id told you at the end of 2005, but the Colonel here maybe agrees with me, Colonel, it started, I think, in 2004?

Alford: Yes.

Nephew: It was in the beginning of 2004 as Iraqi visitors came to fight the occupation. The Ba'ath Party was managing this resistance all along. And even your commander at that time considered it legal for the Iraqis [to resist]. When Al Qaeda entered Iraq, they followed the American forces. They found the Ba'ath Party's followers had good plans and had prepared military groups, because they were originally from the area and they knew everybody. Therefore, they became one side.

But then they began to force the Iraqi population to stop dealing with your side by killing, kidnapping, and bombing houses, all the inhuman crimes. When your forces paid the price for that by the lives of thousands of your soldiers, you decided to come again and to stand with the good national Iraqi citizens and Iraq. In the same way Al Qaeda found that the Ba'ath Party prepared the field for them, your forces found that Arabic tribes in the area were prepared and were a good core to start establishing a clean government. But they focused on destroying and removing terrorism from the area. They had no concern about the administrative steps to build this new government.

When they destroyed Al Qaeda, they [put] our future in the hands of very bad people in the government. Now all the Iraq Government or governors who are in power now, especially in the provinces, not in Baghdad, they are considered [judged by the Coalition] on how well they helped the American occupation. [26:07] They are receiving your support, finance, military, everything. But when they deal with the Iraqi people, they appear to us as if they only helped the occupation. They try to stay as long as they can in their positions which has caused them to fight the real nationality leaders, who are the tribal leaders, and the young men who stood [and helped defeat the terrorists] at the end of 2005 until now, after the Sahawa. Now they [the politicians] try to take their lives from them.

[As an example,] Sheikh Sa'id will go to the police chief or the mayor or any managers in the Iraqi offices, and he asks them to do something for the citizens of the city or another area. They will refuse to deal with him in order to show to the Hadithah citizens that he will not deal with, what they call, the agents. They call us agents. Now if you will go to the market and ask, "Who are the agents, agents for Americans?" Agents are a very bad word in the Iraqi [language]. It means traitor or something like this. Why are we the traitors?

We have no government, no military support; therefore, the American's support us for our future, not for their [the politicians'] future. This is for us. Now there is interior fighting in Al Anbar. Some new commanders, who called themselves commanders as the Colonel said, they were in Jordan and Syrian. They're dealing now with Ba'ath Party leaders in Syria, and they have secret contacts with the Al Qaeda leaders. Because if Al Qaeda came back, there is no one that would support them. But, on other side, they now have important positions in the Iraqi government offices and they now control our lives. They try to remove all of the old leaders who dealt with the Coalition Forces. I consider this an administrative mistake.

The Colonel [Alford] is military. He understands the military machines, attack, defend, but maybe he has no concept about how the mayor's office can be established. [29:23]

Alford: This is why we need the State Department. Or Foreign Service Officers who understand government.

Nephew: Sorry for the explanation, but I understand my uncle.

Knarr: That's what I need to understand.

Nephew: There are some mistakes from the Coalition Forces, because they were fighting Al Qaeda with us. They mistakenly shot some civilians, which was a big story in America and other countries that the Americans are killing Iraqi civilians, and they made it a big deal. But, it's normal [can be expected] when he [the Coalition Forces] passes through the city that I will shoot at him. He must defend himself and he [Coalition Force] will shoot back and into my house. [Unfortunately], the bullet will go left or right.

Two Colonels came to Hadithah to visit in the beginning of 2008. Many senators from your country in America and Senator McCain came also. They met your forces here. They supported Hadithah so much they tried to find jobs for the people, they tried to support the police, and make Hadithah more stable. But, I consider it a very bad agreement between the Iraqi government and America when they [the Iraqi government] asked America to pull out their hand in our issues. Why? When Colonel Farouq was working here [as the IP Chief] and America supported his mission and watched him day-by-day, he was scared to do anything wrong, because you are a strong supervisor and the only supervisor. He knew that if he made any mistakes, any Colonel, Captain, or Major could fire him. But when they moved back to Al-Asad and other places, there is no more American interested in our issues. He must depend on his corrupt manager or chief in Ramadi or Baghdad. This is an example, we need the strong supervisor; we need the [American's] watching our work.

Now the interior conflict in Baghdad is between the Iraqi parties. Who will win in the election of 2010? [They] try to agree between them on who will be the Prime Minister and who will be the President or something like that. Iran is now planning. Iran is not scared of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or Jordan. But, all the Middle East will be scared of the American justice.

Alford: What we're doing wrong is we skipped an important piece of this whole withdrawal. The piece that we skipped is we didn't leave strong advisor teams with the police and with the Iraqi Army. We're doing it from our bases on a periodic basis. We went from being completely partnered to pulling back to our Forward Operating Bases, without leaving that Military Transition Team (MiTT) in place. We say we got MiTTs, but where do they live? They live back at Al-Asad. They ought to live in that police station for another year. We could do that with probably 20,000 good soldiers. That's what he just explained, that's what is missing.

Nephew: Because there is an absence of the good Iraqi leaders in Baghdad to supervise, to take your role, to supervise the small manager like the governors of Ramadi and the police chiefs.

Alford: The only MiTTs we left in place on the ground are at the brigade and provincial levels —they need to be at the lower levels.

Knarr: I thank you for being so candid. We're looking for you to be frank with us, so we can understand some of the mistakes and lessons. I thank you for being very honest.

Nephew: Our last hope now is for Allawi to be in power. He promises us he will be honest. He will be the last hope for us to arrive. We follow the news, and we try to understand the activities of these parties in Baghdad. But Iran will not allow Allawi, who will support all the Iraqi people, to be in charge unless America takes a real role to bring Allawi and other people like him. Allawi [is] global. Now even the tribal people like the global person. We don't want any religious person to come to power and give us some old activities in the past from our prophet's period. We need the global guys to deal with America and the Arabic countries, and to develop the economy.

We need jobs. Hadithah has maybe the most unemployment for young men. But, you have to pay [for jobs]. This is the corruption: you have to pay \$6,000 American dollar to get a job in the elected office of Ramadi or Hadithah; \$4,000 in the oil. Who has \$4,000 now?

Alford: Sheikh's got a Marine Mameluke sword [looking at the wall above our heads].

Nephew: General Gaskins gave him the sword. This is in Habbaniyah when they gave him the sword.

Knarr: That's Dave Bellon [in one of the pictures].

Sa'id: He's a good Colonel. They put it in one picture. They collected and they assembled them. That's me and the Sheikh Muhammed Aftaiya...Aftaiya from Haditha.

Knarr: You have quite a history, quite a lineage! [41:03]

Subject: Interview with Hadithah Mayor Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah, Iraq

On 14 April 2010, Mayor Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid was interviewed at his office in Hadithah. Although Mayor Hakim is a member of the Albu-Jughayfi tribe, he was adamant that he does not use the tribe in his name because he felt, as a politician, that he represented everyone in Hadithah. We also interviewed Sheikh Said of the Albu-Jughayfi tribe, and it was clear then that Mayor Hakim has accomplished his objective of ensuring that no one misconstrued a bias towards his tribe, because Sheikh Said told us that felt he was not being represented.



We were also met by Mr. Maysar and Mr. Salam, mayors of Barwana and Haqlaniyah respectively. Although Hakim was the mayor for the entire Hadithah District including the triad (Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, and Barwana), those two towns also had elected mayors. After the interview with Mayor Hakim, Mr. Salam escorted us to the soccer stadium, the Hadithah dam, and the K3 pump station to discuss the pipeline and the berm that was built around the city for security and population control.

Mayor Hakim was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and LtCol David Graves, USMC. An interpreter was used for the interview. The following is his account of the Awakening.

Dr. Bill Knarr: I'd like you to start by giving us some of your background. Were you born in Hadithah? Did you grow up here and go to school here?

Mayor Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid: I was born in 1956 in Al Qaim near the Syrian border. I finished middle school in Al Qaim. I came to Hadithah in 1974 and finished high school, and then I entered the university in Baghdad. When I left I went overseas, because I was opposed to the regime here. I went to Beirut, and I studied law by correspondence. Then I moved to Germany after the situation became bad in Lebanon. I traveled to many European countries and Arabic countries. Then I came back to Iraq.

Knarr: When did you come back?

Hakim: In the '80s.

In 2003 after Saddam's regime fell, I started working in the political party. I was a member of an Arabic party. We followed the teachings of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian. This is my first government position here. I started 1 February 2007 as the Mayor. I am still in this position. I have many wives. I like women, but I marry them legally.

Knarr: How long have you lived in Hadithah?

Hakim: Since 1974.

Knarr: Before you became Mayor, what did you do?

Hakim: I was an active politician. [4:26]

Knarr: When and how did the insurgency start in Hadithah?

Hakim: When the American forces invaded Iraq in 2003 and after President Bush declared the end of the operations on 1 May 2003, all Iraqis, including Hadithah citizens, welcomed the Coalition forces. I remember all the Hadithah citizens taking pictures with the Marines. They took pictures and they rode the HMMWVs. But after that, everything changed. The Iraqi situation was very complex, and they started fighting the Coalition forces. They started beheading people. If they [had] doubts about anyone who helped the American forces, they cut off his head. The situation became very bad, and the people were afraid.

Knarr: When did that happen, and was it foreign fighters that came in and did that?

Hakim: Yes, they were foreign fighters, and they came here. The Iraqi people welcomed them as they welcomed the American forces before.

The Iraqi person is a moody person. We have intellectual people in Iraq. The intellectual class in Iraq, they were opposed to the old regime, Saddam's regime. All of them wanted Saddam's regime to fall. But, as the political class in Iraq, we disagreed among ourselves. Some of us wanted help from the American forces. Some resided outside of Iraq. Some sought change from inside Iraq. But you know, the old regime killed any [one that had anything] to do with change in Iraq, so we depended on the resistance from outside Iraq. [09:17]

Here in Hadithah, the tribal leaders suffered at the hand of the insurgents. They were forced to cooperate with the insurgents, but they were willing to cooperate with the American forces. Then they established the police in August 2006 with the

cooperation of the Marines. The tribal leaders pressured their sons to join the IP, Iraqi Police. Their goal was to get rid of the bad guys. We reached that goal by cooperating with the American forces and the IPs.

In Hadithah, there was no popular Sahawa [like there was in Ramadi or other places]. The Sahawa in Hadithah occurred when the sons of the tribes, all the people, joined the IP and resisted the bad guys. This is how we created the Sahawa in Hadithah. For this reason, I spend a lot of time with the sheikhs, because they sacrificed their sons' lives to establish a Sahawa here. And nobody led the Sahawa in Hadithah. There was no popular militia to fight the Sahawa. It was official. They joined the IP. This way, we established the security in Hadithah. Six months after we established the IP, I came here and I took this position as mayor of Hadithah. The commander of the Marines was Lieutenant Colonel Donnellan.

Colonel Dale Alford, USMC: 2/3.

Hakim: Yes, 2/3. We held a meeting with many people of Hadithah. [There were] at least 200 people there. I talked with them. I told them, "If I find any foreign fighters in any house, I am going to take their woman and make her naked in the flea market." They worry about this; they got scared. I was very serious about this threat. So, with the help of God we succeeded. The IPs did their job, and they caught all the bad guys or the bad guys ran away. A lot of IPs sacrificed their lives. The Marines also died for Hadithah. Everyone in Hadithah recognized the job the Marines did. Cooperation among the IP, the Marines, and the tribes is how we established security in Hadithah. [14:39]

We spent 2007 fighting the terrorists in Hadithah. During the first half of 2008, we convinced the local government of Ramadi to invest in Hadithah. By the middle of 2008, we started building projects in Hadithah. We started remodeling and building schools, furnishing them. We also worked on hospitals, clinics, and brought in doctors and medication. People started to show up at work—on time. We paved the roads, fixed the water pumps. And of course, the American forces were also rebuilding with us.

So, then we said to the people, "Who's better, the bad guys or us?" We told the people that, "The bad guys kill you, but we rebuild the town." Now 100 percent of the people show up at work from 0800 to 1500.

About the Sahawa, if you have any questions, I gave you the true story—this is the real story of the Awakening in Hadithah. The Sahawa in Hadithah is different than

the Sahawa in Ramadi. In Ramadi it may have started with the tribes because they [Al Qaeda in Iraq] killed the tribal leaders, the sheikhs, there. For this reason it started out of revenge in Ramadi, because they killed their sheikhs, their fathers. It may have started for those reasons in Fallujah also. But there was no cooperation [or relationship] between the Awakening in Fallujah and Ramadi and Hadithah.

Knarr: No cooperation?

Hakim: Never. In Hadithah we established the security with the help of the Marines and the people of Hadithah. Nobody came to Hadithah to help; they just entered Hadithah to destroy. We killed and caught a lot of people, and some of them escaped. After the situation stabilized, the Sahawa became a political party. They opened an office, the Awakening Office, in Hadithah. We didn't talk to them, because they established this office with people who were bad guys or their sons were bad guys. They had escaped to Syria and Jordan, but then came back and they said, "We are Sahawa." I talked to Sheikh Ahmed Abu-Risha, to send them away, but he didn't. I told him, "This Awakening Office is going to fail, because the leader of this office worked with the old regime as a security officer." I don't want to mention his name. I can give you the first letter. [21:03]

Knarr: No, no, go ahead.

Hakim: His name is Gazzi Nafa Sulamayn. He's the head of the Awakening office in Hadithah. I told him, "You need to fire this guy." But they didn't listen to me. Then the Sahawa fell and their office is empty. They just drank tea and did nothing. They are liars. They lied to each other and everybody else.

Alford: More of a political party than a security.

Hakim: It has become political.

Now the people like the government. Maybe they have some criticisms about the Mayor, or the IPs, but they know that we fought for them, and we established the security. This is the Awakening in Hadithah. Any other story, it's wrong.

Knarr: There are three areas that we speak of when we think of Hadithah. We think of Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, and Barwana. Are they within your jurisdiction?

Hakim: Yes, they belong to me.

Knarr: They also talk about putting the berm up around that triad of Haqlaniyah, Barwana, and Hadithah? Is the berm still used to restrict people from entering Hadithah?

Hakim: Yes, we have just some specific entrances. There are two entrances from Barwana and one entrance for Haqlaniyah.

Knarr: You said that before 2003, they, the opposition (such as Chalabi) had worked to change the regime. Is that correct? [24:53]

Hakim: Right.

Knarr: Ok, I'm really trying to get the sequence right. When the Americans came, you welcomed the Americans, but then something happened. Something happened where all of a sudden the Iraqis supported the foreign fighters, against the Americans. What happened?

Hakim: The problem with the American forces when they came to Iraq first, they didn't distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. They cooperated with the opposition from outside Iraq. The Iraqi people didn't like the people that ran away. So we called them wheels for the occupation.¹ We accused them of bringing the occupation forces to Iraq. I supported changing the old regime, but not by an occupier.

In 1945, when American forces occupied Japan, Japan became like an oasis of democracy. They [Americans] helped the Japanese people establish their economy. And in South Korea, it made South Korea a democracy. It's become a very good country and their economy grew. Also, Germany enjoys stability and growth in their economy because of America. Also, American people help other countries. We want the American people to help Iraq—bring democracy to establish the economy, infrastructure, culture, and create cooperation between universities. We want to become like the American people, like America. We deserve to live, and we hope for a good relation with the United States. We don't want to fight America. We want you to come back here as experts without body armor or weapons. And you

¹ He's speaking of people like Ahmed Abdel Hadi Chalabi, an Iraqi politician. He was interim oil minister in April–May 2005 and December–January 2006, and deputy prime minister from May 2005–May 2006.

are very welcome any time. And if you want any land here, I can give you land so you can live here. [32:36]

Knarr: I tracked what you were saying about the trends from Japan, to Korea, to Germany, but something happened where the people started supporting the insurgency. What happened?

Hakim: They were expecting too much from the Americans. They thought the Americans had magic or something, so they were disappointed. And the Iraqi people suffered for so long. Iraqi society is a Muslim society, and Islamic extremists came to Iraq. Those extremists started saying, "Those Americans came here to occupy us." Establishing an Islamic country here in Iraq is the solution, and that's what happened. The Coalition was so slow, very slow. You gave those who came in an opportunity. So they recruited the young people.

Now the Iraqi people like the security. They don't care about the food or anything, just the security. They like the security. They don't want to go to jail or prison. They want to be respected. They hope for human rights.

Knarr: Who else should we speak to? We understand how much you have done, who else within Hadithah?

Hakim: Colonel Farouq, he's in charge of the IP. He worked with the Marines. They lived in the palm trees. They were chasing the bad guys from house to house, from roof to roof top. We cooperated with Sheikh Said. Also, Muhammad Sa'il, and many, many other people. This is how we fought Al Qaeda, not through the political Awakening office. That office is just appearance. They're just a bunch of liars. They want to just hurt the honest people who fought for Hadithah. [37:54]

Knarr: I see a lot of growth. I see a lot of construction in Hadithah. Where do you see the future of Hadithah?

Hakim: I wish that Hadithah would become better and better and better. But our local government in Ramadi, those men don't deserve the position. They just work for Ramadi and Fallujah. There are eight towns in this state. There are eight mayors. They don't care about us. Mamoun, the previous governor in Anbar, and now Professor Kasil, both of them are very good. But those who work with them favor Ramadi and Fallujah.

Hadithah, it's like the capital of the west side, the western region. It's like the communication point between the east and north. We're far from the Syrian border,

around 170 kilometers. From here to Ramadi 140 kilometers and from here to Baiji, Salah ad-Din, 140 kilometers. Also we export oil from Hadithah. The pipeline comes through here. The line comes from Kirkuk to K3 [pump station] in Hadithah. Then they distribute it to a Syrian line. There is a pipeline to Syria and Lebanon. And there is a line that goes to towards Basrah. There was an old pipeline that goes to Jordan and Palestine, but it doesn't work now. They stopped it in 1948 because of Israel.

Knarr: What about the Hadithah Dam? I read that 13 percent of the electrical power in Iraq is from the Hadithah Dam. [42:34]

Hakim: In North Hadithah there is a dam, the Hadithah Dam. They built it for two reasons: for the water reserve and to create the electricity. They have six turbines to create electricity. Every turbine creates 110 megavolts, but they stopped because there is no water in the river like before.

They used the water to flood the land for agriculture. But the producers, the farmers immigrated to the town and became consumers rather than producers. The government didn't do anything to create agricultural projects in the desert. The old regime just destroyed the economy. The old regime killed Iraqi people by any method. The old regime was ignorant—Saddam hated everybody.

About the water—if we cooperate with Turkey, we can solve the water problem in the dam here, because we are short on water. We can create more electricity, 600 megavolts. We have a project like in the south—they call it the Hadi'—but they are still building it. The old regime started that project. It will produce 230 megavolts of power when it's finished. You know the town needed 200 megavolts, but now the town needs 700 megavolts. We are still waiting for the project. We also have K3. It's an oil refinery. But you know we need oil to refine the oil, and the oil comes from Baiji. But they don't care about the pipeline. They have to fix the pipeline there. We created a project to transfer the oil from Baiji to here by our railroad, but it's not enough, because the railroad and the trains are not working 100 percent. [48:01]

LtCol David Graves, USMC: In 2004, the Coalition forces had a strong presence in the area, and it eventually tapered off for the last part of 2004, 2005. How did the people of Hadithah feel? Did they feel betrayed or mistrust when all of a sudden our presence became almost nothing in this area?

Hakim: We suffered a lot after the American forces left Hadithah in 2004 and 2005.

Hadithah's citizens started looking for help from American forces. Then American forces did something wrong—they killed approximately 21 people; some were just two months old.² So they scared the people here in Hadithah and people stood against the American forces.

Knarr: Did the foreign fighters then come in and take control of all the areas, the water, the electricity, and everything else? Is that when they then came in and were accepted by the people?

Hakim: Before that incident, the insurgents came to Hadithah and they took over the government establishments. They started planting IEDs all over the streets of the city. You know, once an IED blew up an American convoy and the Americans followed the wire that led to this IED, and it led to a house. The Americans killed everybody there, even infants. [53:10]

Knarr: So even before the incident, the foreign fighters had come in and started controlling the area. Is that correct?

Hakim: Yes. They came here before the battle, that massacre, and they began taking over all the government establishments.

Graves: Did the United States use a lot of force in 2005? I understand they blew up the bridges. I am sure the people of Hadithah probably didn't appreciate that.

Hakim: Yes, they broke the bridges that connected Hadithah to Barwana. They also demolished some of the schools and some of the government buildings by using the excuse that there were insurgents inside. I know that they already rebuilt the Hadithah bridges, but there are a lot of buildings that are still demolished. I know their intentions are to kill the insurgents, but they should have behaved much more rationally.

Once you go through a war, you should forget your vengeance. You [American forces] said you came here as a liberator. Being a liberator you should have won the support of the peaceful civilians. This bad behavior created enemies.

² Tim McGurk, "Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Hadithah" *Time*, 19 March 2006. On 19 November 2005, a roadside bomb struck a HMWWV carrying Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, on a road near Hadithah. Marines then killed 15 Iraqis, including women and children as they sought those responsible for the IED. www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1174649,00.html accessed 2 March 2011.

You made other mistakes. The anonymous detentions, there are a lot of innocents who went to Bucca for nothing. Once detained, they left their families without any financial support, [without] any shelter. This led some of their kids to go astray. We know once there is no older brother or father, small children go astray. That's why I am holding you responsible for that.

The other mistake you made is that you did not process those detainees through proper courts. They were only held for suspicion. This is against any human rights. Why were they detained? Once you detain somebody, you should accuse [them] of doing something. Those guys were detained for nothing. It's unreasonable that these guys spent a lot of time inside prison without being accused of anything. Once someone is detained for suspicion, it's only a limited time that he should stay in detention. Then he should see a judge. This is a right for any citizen. You could be sued.

You can use this experience for when you invade Syria and Iran [laughing]. [58:40]

Alford: [to Knarr] What do you think? That's the second or third time we've heard that—that the reason we are studying this is so we can invade Iran. Who else told us that?

Knarr: The guy from Fallujah.

Hakim: According to the Iraq Constitution, Iraq cannot be used as a base or in any other way to attack any neighboring country. But you know, a successful Iraqi politician can go and analyze Iran to its origins, the origins of its people, which are ten origins. Once you do that, you may win the war against Iran. But speaking about the Americans and Iranian nuclear weapons, this is another international lie. [Hakim spoke for another 10 minutes about the international conspiracy concerning Iranian nuclear efforts.]

I believe in that international conspiracy; I don't read the lines, I read between the lines. [1:04:55]

Graves: When you built the berms and increased the security measures, how did the people feel about that?

Hakim: After you did that, people felt so good and so secure that they started to support the new government. And they were so patient standing in those long queues to be served once they tried to go into the city. The berm is one of the many things that secured Hadithah. Once we established the entrances and the exits to the city, we established a higher security level.

Knarr: The Americans used the BAT [Biometric Automated Toolset] system for doing census, the iris scan, and the finger prints. Did that help?

Hakim: Yes, it helped us a lot. Before inventing that BAT system, people were not dealing with the Americans or the local government as much as they should. Once we used the BAT system and the badging system for vehicles and people, people [saw the value] and others started to come to the CMOC [Civilian and Military Operations Center] to obtain their badges, to gain approval to live in the city. This was the Marines' idea even before I came here. I used it to as part of the pay roster. I invented a new pay roster, which [included the name of] every employee that worked in any of my departments. I wouldn't sign his pay without [him] being mentioned on that roster. This encouraged them to join the local government. But the idea of badges and the BAT system was a complete success. There are two kinds of badges, personal and vehicle. After that we added the weapon card.

Knarr: What, weapons cards?

Hakim: Weapons cards. Those people who are trustful, we issued them a weapons card. This is how we enforced the relation between the Marines and the citizens. [1:10:50]

Graves: Do you still use that system today?

Hakim: Yes.

Knarr: Do you still use the BATs today?

Translator: I tell you they highly like our badges and they highly respect the American badges here.

Hakim: Even though the badges expired and they are issuing new ones, they are still respected. Once they see an American badge, that's it. You're good to go.

Knarr: Do they use the iris scan?

Hakim: No.

Knarr: Thank you very much. We're very honored that you took the time to see us.

Subject: Interview with Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi, former Chief of Police in Baghdadi during the Awakening.

On 8 April 2010, Col Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi, former Chief of Police in Baghdadi (near Al Asad), was interviewed at the Provincial Government Center (PGC) in Ramadi. As a result of the new Provincial Chief of Police (PCOP), Major General Ba'ha moving police around in the Province, Col Shaban was now the Chief of the Anbar SWAT Team located next to Camp Ramadi. We sought a meeting with Col Shaban at the recommendation of Colonel Norm Cooling, former Commander 3/3 Marines who operated in the Hadithah Triad area from March to September 2006. Col Shaban, known as the "Lion of Baghdadi" was wounded on 3 October 2006, in an attempted assassination and was featured in local and national news as a hero.



**Col Shaban, Police Chief,
Baghdadi**

Col Shaban was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and LtCol David Graves, USMC. An interpreter was used for the interview. The following is his account of the Awakening.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Please talk about your background before the Coalition arrived.

Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi: My name is Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin Al-Ubaydi. I'm from Anbar province, from Baghdadi's Jubbah. I grew up and studied there. I come from a very good and really big family in Jubbah. I studied in Habbaniyah, and I joined the Air Force. I had some issues with the Ba'ath Party, so I left the Air Force, and was hired to be in charge of a facility building in Baghdadi.³

There were a lot of people who wrote that we [my family] were against and didn't like the Ba'ath Party. I went to jail twice because I didn't like the Ba'ath Party. They interrogated me and they checked my background. I was cleared. I didn't belong to any parties, so they put me in charge of a facility building in Baghdadi.

³ Shaban refers to a facility building MHC near Baghdadi which is a Military Housing Complex that used to be used to house the families of Iraqi s that were stationed at Al Asad and nearby areas.

When the Coalition invaded Iraq in 2003, I was there in Baghdadi and met the Coalition Forces there. [4:37] We had a pretty good relationship in 2003, so they asked me if I needed any help for the families in the facility building MHC. The Coalition patrolled there many times. But the insurgents started to work against us, because they thought we worked for the Coalition. At the end of 2003, the insurgents attacked my brother's house. They destroyed my house in Rawah.

I have ten brothers, and the insurgents always threatened us. They said, "If we capture Shaban, we'll kill him." I don't want to talk about my house, but whenever you go to Rawah, you are going to see our houses are destroyed. They called us "traitors," because the Americans used to help us by bringing supplies for the families there. That's how the Arab people grew up. When the Americans visited us, we couldn't just tell them, "Hey, we don't want you." We [wanted to] sit down and have a meeting. The Coalition Forces met with us to help the people, not to get information from us. They told us they wanted [to start] a police [force] and a City Council. I started working as an Iraqi Army officer. All my brothers [worked] with me. We joined the Iraqi Army, not because of money, but to keep the insurgents outside the cities and to provide security for the people.

Knarr: When was that?

Shaban: The end of 2004. We helped recruit people into the Iraqi Police. We felt bad when we found that some of the people we had recruited were working on both sides; they had two faces. The Coalition Forces used to train them and support them with vehicles, weapons, and radios. They built a police station for them. They supported them with everything. [09:09]

Knarr: And when was this?

Shaban: 2004 and the beginning of 2005 in Baghdadi. There was going to be police and Iraqi Army in Baghdadi. They trained them. This was all over Anbar. What the Coalition Forces did in Baghdadi, they did in Rawah, Ubaydi, and Al Qaim. They had an academy in Al Asad, and they started training the Iraqi Police. I want to thank you, because you guys [the Americans] spent a lot of time helping these people grow up and become policemen to help the Iraqi people. But a lot of people didn't feel this way, they didn't really care. They were working both sides: the insurgents and the Iraqi Forces. They started rumors like, "The Coalition Forces are going to leave Iraq, and then what are you guys going to do after that? You need to quit being policemen and Iraqi Army and work on our side."

In April 2005, everything was broken down. The Iraqi Police and the Iraqi Army did not know where the vehicles, the weapons, the radios, or the money were. I saw a request from the Iraqi Government to investigate this problem. They were traitors to Iraq [those that took the equipment and money]. They are why the insurgents blew up this country and made the division between the religion and the tribes. I started getting threats.

I want to tell you another story. In April of 2005, I was wearing a dishdasha and a headdress. I wasn't carrying my ID card with me. The insurgents stopped me and started asking questions and hit me. They pointed at me in the face, slapped me, and they beat the shit out of me. I ran away from Baghdadi. I went back to Baghdad, the capital city, until October 2005.

My brother Abdula Jafar and another brother that got killed, Abdul Qadir, and I moved to Baghdad. My brother, who is on the Baghdad City Council right now, called me and told me, "The insurgents started killing our people in Baghdadi. [14:28] They attacked us." He told us, "Either we live together or we die together." I was thinking about it. My family and my brother got killed in Baghdadi, and I am staying in Baghdad.

On 6 October 2005, I knew that the insurgents were in charge of the entire Al Anbar province. When I was heading back from Baghdad to Baghdadi, I met General Balsam [sp]. He's currently the 1st Division commander in Fallujah. I met him on my way to Baghdadi, and he protected me. He said that the Iraqi Army was on its way to Baghdadi to clear it, so General Balsam provided security for me. We were talking about a way to bring the police back to the police stations. I told him the truth: "I'm going to be the first one fighting and the first one that's going to die in the battlefield." This is a true story. If you want to double check, ask the Marines, General Balsam, or Lieutenant Colonel Cooling 3/3.

When I got to Baghdadi, I was told the situation. Everyone was scared—women and children. They didn't call them insurgents—they called them *mujahedeen*. The sheikhs didn't call them insurgents either; they kept saying *mujahedeen*. They never said they were insurgents. They just kept saying they were *mujahedeen*.

I went inside the MHC Baghdadi FOB [forward operating base] up there. I went inside the mosque and I saw some Wahhabi guys. They had long beards and short dishdashas. They were the eye for the insurgents inside the mosque. They were all together and thinking the same thing. [18:39] All of the insurgents had jobs. They

knew what to do. Al Qaeda has a different way of thinking about different issues, and they had a lot of people working with them.

I went inside the mosque with my shoes on. I was wearing a t-shirt, and I had a Special Forces pin saying I was armed. It was afternoon prayer time. They wanted to get out of the mosque, and I told them to “Go back! I have to something to say to you. This is a message for your daddy, Osama Bin Laden, and the youngest guy in Al Qaeda.” I said, “I swear to God I am going to fight you guys forever! I will fight you wherever you go. I am saying this, and I am not afraid, because you are not working for the Iraqi people. You aren’t helping them.” They don’t come over here to help the Iraqi people. They want to bring the battle to Iraq. The victims are the Iraqi people. “You destroy and you kill. God willing, I am going to fight you and the generation right after me is going to fight you too.” I was talking to them with the speakers inside the mosque. The US Special Forces came to me and sat down with me. I told the Special Forces, “I am here to fight the insurgents.” It took time—three to four months—to make the Americans trust us. I gave them my plan. They needed to study it and push it up to their Lieutenant Colonel. The Coalition was happy, but they couldn’t give me the green light.

Knarr: What was the plan? [22:13]

Shaban: I was going to put my hand in the Coalition’s hand in front of everybody. We had long meetings. Whenever we met with the Coalition Forces, we also brought the sheikhs. It wasn’t just me, but other sheikhs. We got us, the good people, to join the Iraqi Police. It was the people we knew, not the insurgents. We did the same things with the Iraqi Army. We didn’t want to go back [to how it was] in 2004 when the Coalition Forces spent time, money, and training, and then lost everything! I told them, “I am the first fighter here. I am the first one who is going to die here for this country.” That was in Baghdadi area. Thank God, I have ten brothers and there are seven more. Those seven were hurt so bad because of the insurgents. They lost a lot of their family members. So I was controlling the Facility Building, the MHC.

On 15 November 2005, I gained control of Jubbah and 32 villages [as the Chief of Police]. The last meeting I held was Christmas day, 25 December 2005. We captured a lot of really dangerous insurgents. Colonel Crowe took over the AO there [in early 2006]. Lieutenant Colonel Cooling [commanded 3/3 Marines]. They start controlling the MHC, the Baghdadi area, Jubbah, and Dulab. Then I moved to Albu Hyatt in Hadithah. The Marines and a Special Forces team were with us. Whenever

we went inside the cities—Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, Barwana—we talked to the people over speakers. We told them what we were doing there. [26:34]

Thank God, we gained control of everything, and we told the Iraqi people to help us with information and to join the Iraqi Police. We recruited from many different tribes in Baghdadi. They used to give the police a nickname—the Iraqi *Shaban Shurta* [*shurta*, long a, means *police*]. Not everyone joined the police, only the people whose families were hurt by the insurgents. They used to threaten people, send messages to them. I’m one of the people who went [looking] for the insurgents. At the time, when we started controlling Baghdadi and the little areas around Baghdadi, the Coalition Forces, US Marines, and US Army, started helping the Iraqi people rebuild the schools, the clinics, and fix the streets. This was in 2006. Colonel Crowe was there from RCT-7. General Balsam al-Thai [phonetic] from 7th Division was also there.

We were trying to show the people that Baghdadi is a small example of Al Anbar, so that the people in Al Anbar could learn things from Baghdadi, and fight the insurgents. I was responsible for security in Baghdadi, and at the same time for Rawah, Anah, Hit, and Hadithah. Me, General Balsam, and Colonel Crowe were always in contact with one another. We met every week. Mr. Hamed Jasat [phonetic] came to Colonel Crowe and they made him the Hit Police Chief. I started working with the Army guys in Hit. I started working with the Hit Police Chief making people in Hit join the Iraqi police. In April 2006, Lieutenant Colonel Cooling told me that Colonel Farouq Al-Jugayfi was going to be the Hadithah Police Chief. They brought him from Mosul to Al-Asad in a helicopter down to Baghdadi. I helped Colonel Farouq. I gave him 90 fighters who worked with the Marines in Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, and Barwana. They used to live in the Marines headquarters, Hadithah Dam, Barwana area, Haqlaniyah. All of these areas belonged to Hadithah. I helped Colonel Farouq stand up.⁴

He appreciated it so much. He’s really a good fighter. [32:32] He lost some of his family [to the insurgents]. They cut off his brother’s head. He’s really a hero, a really good guy. Colonel Farouq made an agreement with Colonel Crowe, Lieutenant Colonel Cooling, and General Balsam to support the Iraqi Army in Hadithah and to make them work together, but we stayed in Hadithah to gain intelligence and follow the insurgents. We were providing information for the

⁴ Our team spoke to Colonel Farouq and he was good friend of Colonel Shaban.

Coalition. We did the same thing in Rawah, Anah and Hit. Then Colonel Crowe went to Kubaysah and built an Iraqi Police station. Mr. Hamed Rasak, a general who was in Kubaysah, was arrested and is in Abu Ghraib. Also, Colonel Farouq took over Hadithah.

On 10 October 2006,⁵ I was in the hospital; my chest and shoulder were injured. It was really bad, so Colonel Crowe made me live right next to him in Al Asad, so they could take care of me in the hospital. I still have this picture of General Zilmer and myself; I'll never let it go. [35:34] I appreciate them, because they brought me back from Al Asad to my house in MHC in the facility building. The people started rumors, "Colonel Shaban died. He's gone. He's not in charge anymore." They [the insurgents] started threatening the Baghdadi people to make them quit the Iraqi Police. I have records of all this. Thank God I got out of the hospital.

When I got out from the hospital, I saw the Awakening people under the command of Abdu Sattar Albu-Risha. We had been hoping for the Awakening for a long time. Thank God for the Awakening. It was not just in Anbar province, it was all over. The Awakening helped us because we had a lot of pressure on us in Baghdadi. The insurgents tried to kidnap us many times. They tried to hit me with VBIEDs, IEDs, and mortars. They would try to blow me up with a suicidevest bomber. Thank God he made me stay where I was. To every military person, I appreciate everything they did that helped us here.

After everything was secure, I was the first one in charge in Baghdadi as a Police Chief from Lieutenant Colonel Bellon, Colonel Clardy from RCT 2 took over Baghdadi from the Marines. All the police in Baghdadi were professionals. They were the first IPs in Anbar province. When they turned over everything in Anbar province to the Iraqi Government, I got a letter of appreciation, because the Baghdadi Police Station was the first IP station in Anbar province.

Knarr: When was that?

Shaban: 2008. The appreciation letter was from Major General Murthi.⁶ He's an AOC [Anbar Operations Center in Ramadi] commander in Al Anbar. We said, "The Iraqi Police is for the Iraqi people, not against the Iraqi People." The IPs I had in

⁵ American Forces Press Service, "Police Chief Survives Attack; Soldiers Capture High-Value Terrorists," 6 October 2006.

⁶ Major General Murthi was the Commander of the 7th Iraqi Army Division and a member of the Albu-Mahal tribe.

Baghdadi were from all over Iraq. They were not just Sunnis, they were Shia, Christians, and Muslim, all people. [40:34] There were a lot of people that used to live in MHC, the facility building. There are Shia, because I took them there, because I love all of the Iraqis. We love all of the people in the world, not just the Iraqis. I hate the criminals. We fight them. We have to fight them with the Coalition Forces.

Note: Colonel Shaban provided a lot of electronic media from his files: video and photos of when he was injured, of the Awakening members, Colonel Farouq in Hadithah, the Iraqi Police, Fox News video of him.

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Subject: Interview with Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah District Chief of Police (DCOP), on the Awakening.

On 8 April 2010, Col Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah District Chief of Police (DCOP) was interviewed at the Provincial Government Center (PGC) in Ramadi. As a result of the new Provincial Chief of Police (PCOP), MG Ba'ha, moving police around in the province, Col Farouq had been recently reassigned to the Habbaniyah area southeast of Ramadi. We sought a meeting with Farouq at the recommendation of Colonel Norm Cooling, Commander 3/3 Marines in the Hadithah area from March to September 2006. 3/3 could not find any residents of Hadithah to assume police responsibilities, so they sought candidates from an area north of Hadithah and Col Farouq volunteered.



Col Farouq, Police Chief,
Hadithah

Col Farouq was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and LtCol Dave Graves, USMC. An interpreter was used for the interview. The following is his account of the Awakening.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Could you give us just a short background on where you are from and what you did before the Coalition came to Iraq?

Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi: My name is Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi. I was born in Salah ad-Din province in Shirqat. I graduated from the Military Academy in 1988. I worked as an officer in the Republican Guard. I was then transferred to the Ministry of Interior/Provincial Security Forces (MOI/PSF), and I worked at the PSF/Kirkuk. The PSF are anti-smuggling forces, and my PSF was responsible for securing the borders from sheep- and oil smugglers. Then I was transferred to be the head of the PSF command in Al Anbar.

All my family, my father, and my tribe are from Haqlaniyah and Hadithah. After the old regime crumbled, I was jobless in Haqlaniyah. After that, a lot of insurgents started working in Hadithah in a very concentrated way. We clashed with the insurgents many times, because we didn't agree with the way they were operating, by killing the Iraqi Police (IPs) and the Iraqi Army (IAs) soldiers. We tried to convince them that Iraq must be built on security. In one incident, I saw one of the 27th Brigade IA individuals shot multiple times. He was left dead on the bridge. I

didn't agree with that. I talked to the insurgents and told them, "This is against humanity and Islam. What is his fault? He's protecting his country, and this how he is repaid?" After I said that, Al Qaeda issued the order to execute me. I left Haqlaniyah and went to Salah ad-Din in 2004. [5:22]

Knarr: How and when did the insurgency start?

Farouq: End of '03, beginning of '04. I didn't see it myself, but I heard from people that the insurgents started as small groups training outside of Hadithah in the small wadi, valleys. They consisted of Iraqis and Arab fighters from Arabic countries. They started as small groups. There's an old saying in Iraq, "The unit with its leader. If the leader is great, the unit will be great." The terrorists started convincing people that they were there to fight American occupation and they were not there to fight the residents.

Colonel Hassan Hurat was head of the IPs in Hadithah. I used to tell him, "You cannot negotiate with the terrorists." Hurat was killed after that. He wasn't a good leader for the IPs. He didn't have enough experience to lead the IPs. He was a lieutenant who was kicked out of the Army. I told him, "You cannot have people without shoes and braids in their hair lead the Iraqi people." And these small groups of terrorists started expanding and taking control of the city.

On 7 November 2004, these terrorists blew up the main city centers and the IP station in Hadithah. They guys demolished the four major IP stations. They hit the IP stations with vehicle borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs). They controlled the city by kidnapping people. The people they kidnapped were those who had cooperated with Coalition Forces. The terrorists executed them in public and the rest of the people were scared to do anything. After that Al Qaeda controlled the city. [10:38]

Knarr: You know 7 November is when Operation AL FAJR started, the Battle of Fallujah. So when the Marines left Hadithah to support the Coalition fight in Fallujah, Al Qaeda struck Hadithah.

Farouq: Before we used to call them Wahhabis, and now we call them the infidels. They are very extreme.

I was a civilian at the time. I wasn't an IP, but we knew. Like everybody knows that Fallujah was hot, and that the Marines had to put a lot of resources into it. Major insurgent leaders originally from Hadithah also went to Fallujah to fight.

After the four IP stations were leveled, Al Qaeda completely controlled the city. Hadithah was a very strategic location. It was between Salah ad-Din, Ninawa, and the Syrian borders, so it was what we called a “knot.” It was a strategic location consisting of many escape routes that Al Qaeda used when they were attacked by the IA. They also used the “night” to go through the valleys to butcher residents that were talking bad about Al Qaeda. They would just slaughter them, and leave them to scare the people. [14:36]

Knarr: Did you say the Wadi Hawran? [I heard Colonel Farouq say this but didn’t hear the interpreter mention the name. Hawran is a huge wadi located southwest of Hadithah.]

Farouq: Yes. Wadi Hawran is the valleys. This valley goes all the way to Jordan. After that I left Hadithah and went to Shirqat District, because the situation was very dire. I had only two options: either support the terrorists or get killed. When I left Hadithah and went to the Shirqat, a small group of Al Qaeda followed me. One of the PSF commanders, who is a friend of mine, called me and said, “We caught a small armed squad from Al Qaeda. Their job was to assassinate you.” I attended the interrogation of the members of this small squad that tried to assassinate me, and I asked them, “I’m not an ISF member, I’m not a translator or a linguist, and I’m not a contractor; why do you want to kill me? I’m just a civilian.” They told me, “We just had orders to assassinate you, take you out.” After that it was just unbearable killing and violence in Hadithah.

Knarr: When was this?

Farouq: Beginning of 2005. It was hell there. Al Qaeda was in full control of the city. I tried to recruit and organize any kind of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)—either IA or IPs—just to protect the city. The Marines and the US Army helped. We started by giving the Coalition Forces locations of where the Al Qaeda groups were. We had several meetings in 2005 at K-1Base. Then the Americans approached me and asked, “We need to establish an IP unit in Hadithah. Would you be interested?”

Knarr: When was this?

Farouq: In the beginning of 2006.

Colonel Dale Alford, USMC: Now we’re talking about 3/1. [18:20]

Farouq: The US Forces asked me, “Do you want 25 officers to be trained in Baghdad and 250 IPs to be trained in Jordan?” I started looking for my old buddies in the

surrounding area, but they left Hadithah, because it was extremely hot. I started looking for them in Salah ad-Din, Shirqat, and Al Jazeera—all the areas they moved to. I tried to bring them back, but nobody wanted to fight in Hadithah. They changed the meeting [from K-1 Base] to be in a forward operating base in Diara [phonetic], but I don't know the exact name. It's close to Mosul, right between Shirqat and Mosul. It's a forward operating base. It's closer to us from Kirkuk.

I sent 22 officers to attend a course at the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad. I sent 205 IPs to Jordan. Another three guys and I went to Hadithah with the Marines. I flew in a helicopter with the Marines all the way to Baghdad, from Baghdad to Al Asad, and from Al Asad to the Hadithah Dam. At that time, Hadithah was hell. I agreed with Lieutenant Colonel Donnellan that he could take me to Captain Lunge. He had a company right in the middle of Hadithah.

The insurgents had a signature IED there that they used in addition to the actual IED, either a tank of oxygen or a large propane tank. While en route, a tank was hit with this kind of IED. We were with the seven-ton truck and the tank got hit and another IED hit us right inside Hadithah. I advised the convoy commander to finish the convoy on foot, because it was very dangerous in the vehicles. The Marines said it's extremely dangerous to walk because of the small arms fire. And I said, "No problem it's very close and we can walk."

I expected that when I arrived in Hadithah there would be a celebration. That's when I invited people to join the IPs. But because the people of Hadithah have never in the history of mankind been subjected to so much pain and suffering—their houses destroyed, children killed—my reception was the opposite of what I expected. They wouldn't shake my hand or say hello to me. Anybody who saw me would just turn their face and walk or run away. I suffered a lot at the beginning of '06.

Alford: The small squad you were talking about earlier was out of 3/25. Al Qaeda captured the sniper team from 3/25. They caught them asleep. What you were talking about earlier was in the summer of 2005.

Farouq: In the seventh month of 2005, we were on a patrol.

Alford: LtCol Urquhart.

Farouq: I know the people who did it. It was before I came. It was before I joined the IPs, I was at Shirqat at that time. [26:05]

Knarr: Can you bring the map over here Dave? I want to see where Shirqat is and where the Wadi is.

Farouq: Right close to Salah ad-Din; even before I joined the IP team, everybody was keeping a close eye on Hadithah, especially the people from Hadithah.

Knarr: You said it was near here?

Farouq: The Coalition Forces, the Americans, were in a patrol in this sector. They always used this route.

Knarr: Okay, so right in here.

Farouq: Right in this specific place. Right there, the house right there. I told the Americans that I thought we'd find the body armor and the helmets for the Marines who were killed in this house. General Sa'id, who led the operation, was in the old regime. He's with Al Qaeda there, I think he had been with Ansar al Sunnah. They came crawling down until they crushed the Marine unit that was there. They killed some of the Marines there and took the rest of them to Haqlaniyah. I was in Shirqat, but I heard about that.

We used to have the Thuraya satellite phones, which could give me grids [location], and we contacted the Americans. We did an operation with Said Ali Huair [phonetic]. Mohammed Ali Sain Muklid [phonetic], he's in Syria now. I put him in jail for three years, but I couldn't do anything more with him. The law was a little bit complicated. I had to let him go. Ali Junaid [phonteic], his brother, and Munir Muhammad Samran, he died five days ago in jail in Hadithah. And we have another guy named Lamieu Deah [phonetic]; it's a whole group. [30:42]

[Return from break, discussing LtCol Cooling, Commander 3/3 Marines in Hadithah from March to September 2006, who hired Colonel Farouq.]

Lieutenant Colonel Cooling was one of the great, successful leaders. He is very smart and has a big brain. I am still in contact with him. I think he's the head of an academy or head of a school.

Knarr: Mountain Warfare Training Center. I saw him several months ago. In fact, he recommended that we see you.

Farouq: He's an extremely smart person. The Colonel was asking me, "How are you going to get the people to help you? This is becoming an extremely violent city—even a one-year-old child will wear masks and start shooting." Killing was easy

then. I told him, “I need your help. I need male and female searchers, because it’s going to be a mess.” He asked, “How is it going to be messy?” I said, “Don’t worry, I’ll show you how we’re going to do it.”

We arranged to have a small desk in this small FOB where the civilian contractors stayed. So they put in this desk, and they got me the searchers because I was going to be bringing a lot of people in and needed to have them searched first. I went to the head of the Hadithah bank. In Iraqi Law, the bail bond system is different. I was thinking of how I could break the ice with the civilians. How was I going to meet with them and bring them into the FOB so I could talk with them?

I spread the word that I would offer a bail bond to anybody who had been arrested and was in Bucca [detention facility]. If the person wasn’t extremely dangerous, we would allow the family to sign as a guarantor for 50 million Iraqi Dinar, which comes to around 40 thousand dollars. It’s not in cash. It’s just they will sign to get him out of Bucca, and guarantee that he would no longer be involved in terrorism. This is all on paper, of course. We did this to break the ice and meet with the people.

Once the word spread, people came in by tens and hundreds. We started talking about the IPs. We need the IPs, but nobody was willing to join me. However, Sheikh Sa’id,⁷ Sheikh Muhammad Asaia, Sheikh Awad, and Sheikh A’aid [phonetic] helped me convince their tribal members that we needed to kick the terrorists out of the city. [35:44]

Knarr: What tribes did they represent?

Farouq: Jughayfi. Jughayfi was the largest tribe there.

In the beginning, we sent 18 guys to Jordan to be trained for the first IP station.

Knarr: What month and year was this?

Farouq: End of 2006. Then, the 22 IPs that we sent to Baghdad came back after they completed training and they went to Hadithah.

Alford: Towards the end of Cooling’s [1/3’s] time.

Farouq: There were nine officers out of the 22 IPs. They graduated, and they came for duty. One of them was my brother. Al Qaeda caught all these nine officers in the

⁷ We interviewed Sheikh Sa’id of the Albu-Jughayfi tribe.

TharThar area, and they killed all nine of them, including my brother. Colonel Muslik, Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed, Major Usif, Major Muhammad, Captain Muhammad, Captain Fosi, and my brother. They got nine officers who graduated from Baghdad. A lot of the IPs and officers that were with me, they just quit.

They slaughtered all nine of them in TharThar. I found their heads in Baiji, but the actual bodies are still missing. I insisted at that time that we need to have IPs. I had to make IPs even if they were going to get killed, even if I was going to be killed—at least we would have some stability for future generations. Then I got a lot of help from Colonel Sha'ban in the Baghdadi area; he gave me a bunch of IPs. We worked with the IPs from Baghdadi for a long time. Then [6 October 2006] Colonel Sha'ban was seriously injured and his XO was killed. The Americans came in and told me, "We have to go and visit Sha'ban, because he was badly injured." The Marines sent me in a helicopter to go visit. Colonel Sha'ban came back. We started with the Coalition Forces and whatever IPs and IAs we had. We worked extensively on intelligence to pinpoint where they trained, where they kept their weapons, weapon caches, and their assembly areas. We started taking out Al Qaeda slowly by surely. It was getting weaker and the IPs were getting stronger, but very gradually. [40:57]

Knarr: When was Sha'ban hurt and his XO killed? When did you start building this intelligence?

Farouq: The intelligence work was since 2005, even though we were giving information to Coalition Forces while we were outside the city. Sha'ban was hit in the tenth month of 2006. Colonel Sha'ban had a huge area of operations (AO). A piece of Hadithah was in his AO and Hit all the way from Al- Fajeer, from the Haqlaniyah area all the way to Baghdadi. He had a large IP Force. He's a tremendously strong, straightforward man. He doesn't have two faces. That is why he succeeds.

I have a very strong will and a very strong grudge against Al Qaeda, because they killed my brother and destroyed my house. When you have a grudge on your mind, you'll never forget it. I will never work with Al Qaeda or terrorists.

In the seventh month of 2007, we opened the first IP station in the Haqlaniyah area. In the same month, we opened the Barwana IP station. Because there are so many dirt roads into the city, we surrounded the city with big berms with the help of the American forces. We left major entry and exit points. Around the end of 2007, Hadithah was stable and as 2008 began, we started to really enforce and stabilize security there. A lot of residents volunteered for the IPs, and a lot of people from the

Albu-Hayat area volunteered as well. I got back the jurisdiction that was disconnected from Hadithah [areas of jurisdiction were fragmented]. That was with Colonel Bierman. I got it back to be all one Hadithah area. [45:14]

In mid-2008, we began to be fighters less and IPs more. Because security was stabilizing, we didn't want too much of a show of force by using our body armor and helmets. We wanted to act as civilized IPs, so we gave up the extra security measures and we dressed like IPs. With the help of US Forces, we made significant arrests in the Baiji area, Kirkuk, Fallujah, Ramadi, and Mosul. We worked in all these areas. We arrested a huge number of terrorists. All the IPs under my command or in Hadithah are still working inside and outside Hadithah. I taught IPs that the best defense is a good offense, so we went after these terrorists everywhere. Just before the elections, I was transferred to Habbaniyah. That's the whole story of Hadithah.

Knarr: That's good, thank you.

Farouq: It's a long story. We had a lot of losses. We won all of these battles because of good morale. They fought terrorists with a high morale, without fear, and with patience. In the beginning, there were some very rough days. We used to eat the same things as the Americans—biscuits and the MREs. When I came to Hadithah there were no IPs. All the buildings were gone, all the paper [files] were gone; we started from zero. But we did it, thank God! I am very happy because I did this for the good people of Hadithah. Now Hadithah is all developed, and they have new buildings. A number of important people visited as well: John McCain and Congressional delegations, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, several members of the Congress, and the Admiral at the head of the Joint Forces, the Joint Command Forces.

Knarr: Admiral Mullen, chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Farouq: And General Odierno. [50:25]

There are new buildings, streets, and schools. Now the city is secured, but I am very cautious in case something happens.

Knarr: We knew that Hadithah was a long story, because so much happened there.

Farouq: Yes. The Marines suffered a lot of casualties. We had a lot of problems—a number of Marines were court marshaled. Al Qaeda had a lot of fighters, expert

fighters there. With the help of the Marines and our knowledge, we took them out. I sent about 3,000 individuals to Bucca single-handedly.

LtCol Dave Graves, USMC: In the beginnings of 2004 and 2005, there wasn't a strong Coalition presence. We had units there and they would move out, come back, and move out again. There seemed to be a lot of trust lost between the Coalition and Hadithans—what did it take to regain that trust?

Farouq: 2004/2005 were the hardest days on the Hadithans. We started earning hearts and minds in 2006 when I established the IPs. As head of IP, it wasn't my job only to arrest people, but to also to win their hearts and minds. In the beginning of establishing the IP, the Marines and I focused on how to get to the regular, ordinary, peaceful person in Hadithah. The ones who hate terrorism but cannot say it out loud. The Coalition Forces didn't know exactly who were terrorists and who were not. We as IPs had a good idea of who the terrorists were and who the regular, ordinary people were. We used to help each other. When we went on raids to capture well-known terrorists. When it came down to arresting him in front of his family and kids, to make sure that they weren't treating him badly in front of his kids, we would tell them, "Excuse us, we need to talk to you," so we didn't create generations of hatred towards us or the Marines. Plus, the Coalition Forces used to go with us to the schools and give gifts. We worked very hard to change the hate the Hadithans had for the Coalition forces to love. Then I started talking to the people and I said, "The Coalition Forces used physical violence against you, because they couldn't determine who's good and who's bad, so you have to show good faith to the Americans. This way they will not be harsh with you." And step by step, ordinary people would make feasts and invite the IPs and the Coalition Forces to eat together. [57:44]

The main obstacle was between the civilian, and the Iraqi Security Forces [ISF] and Coalition Forces. It doesn't matter if it's ISF or Coalition—the major obstacle was the terrorists. The minute any civilian would talk to ISF or Coalition Forces, he would be slaughtered. With the help of the Coalition Forces, we removed this obstacle. Because we had authority, the knowledge, and developed communication, we removed this obstacle. I expected huge civilian casualties and collateral damage with the liberation of Hadithah, but thank God, none of that happened. With my knowledge and with the planning of everybody around, we did a curfew for 90 days in Hadithah. Nobody could enter or leave the city, and I did a successful return of Hadithah [to stability] with very few casualties between civilians.

I asked Lieutenant Colonel Donnellan—the big, tall guy [nick-named “Stretch”]—“What are you going to do now?” He said, “We’ll develop badges.” He was asked, “What about for the vehicles moving around?” He said, “We will make badges with an Iraqi Flag and Iraqi map on it with a serial number. The vehicle that is authorized to drive around, we’ll stick this badge sticker from the inside of the windshield, and these will be authorized vehicles to move around the city.”

Alford: That’s when they bermed that city.

Farouq: Slowly but surely, the people we knew were good people, we let them drive around. Slowly but surely, we got control of the city. We stopped all the motorcycles though, because it was a very easy for the terrorists to use them to getaway and smuggle stuff. By the time I left Hadithah, there were no motorcycles in the entire city. Motorcycles gave them a fast way to deliver IEDs. When their scouts would see the convoy coming, they immediately signaled the motorcycle drivers. They go and place the IED. The IEDs hurt the Americans extremely, especially inside the city. It was very hard for people. It was hard days, but thank God everything was good. But it was very hard!

Knarr: Sir, thank you! Thank you for all that you’ve done.

Farouq: Please give my best regards to Colonel Cooling and Colonel Donnellan.

Alford: Yes, Sir, I will. We’ll probably talk to Colonel Donnellan again.

Farouq: He was a hero! He was a perfect commander. He had a very strong personality. He had some diplomacy, qualities as a politician and a military man. I’m not an IP. I’m a military man. I spent most of my service years in the Republican Guard. From my side thinking about the standards of the Colonel, he was one of the best military leaders I have ever met. A VBIED hit his Hummer and he came to me laughing, saying, “Oh I just got hit with a VBIED!” He said the military man shouldn’t be surprised with anything going on here, especially the successful military man.

Knarr: What are your concerns for the future? [1:05:07]

Farouq: We always say that the military man is the sacrifice of the politician, so everything is governed by the political situation. So we’ll see what’s going to happen with politics. I’m a military man. I can work anywhere in Iraq, from Basra all the way to the north. I love my job as a military man, and other than military, I will never work.

Knarr: Sir, Thank you! I'm convinced with men like you that Iraq is going to have a great future.

Farouq: I wish this, too. I wish Iraq to be one of the most peaceful, secured countries and the best ally to the United States.

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Subject: Interview with Mr. Numan Abdul Mahsen al-Gaoud, a Businessman and member of the Albu-Nimr Tribe in Hit

Mr. Numan al-Gaoud is a businessman and owner of the Doha Group, a general trading company in Baghdad. Mr. Numan was born in 1961 in the Zuwayyah district of Hit. Numan is a member of the influential al-Gaoud family of the Albu-Nimr tribe located primarily in the Hit area.

After the US invasion, Numan's brother Naim was nominated to be the mayor of Hit. When Naim left his position as mayor, chaos ensued; Al Qaeda's influence grew and they began destroying property and killing Hit residents.

Numan attended meetings at Sheikh Majed's office in Amman, Jordan; at one of those meetings, Sheikh Sattar

Albu-Risha was there and was nominated to lead the Sahawa. After Sattar was assassinated and Ahmed Albu-Risha took over, the Awakening took a political path.

Numan explained that despite all of the economic engagements that took place outside of Iraq, there was never any investment in Anbar province that produced any tangible result. All investment inquiries went through Ahmed Albu-Risha, who controlled all of the funding.

Numan added that Al Qaeda is currently active in Hit and meeting with Ba'athists.

Mr. Numan was interviewed on 13 February 2011 at the Hyatt Hotel in Amman, Jordan by Dr. Bill Knarr, LtCol David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins. Mr. Munther Saiegh provided the translation. The following is his account of events in Iraq.



Mr. Numan al-Gaoud, businessman

Mr. Numan al-Gaoud: I am just about to open a new soda factory. I was busy, but I have been requested to come here, so I have come just for this meeting.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Thank you very much. Sir, could you start by providing some of your background, where were you born, where you were educated?

Numan: I am Numan Abdul Mahsen al-Gaoud. I was born in Hit in the Furat District. It's what we call Zuwayyah District. I was born in 1961. For primary school I studied in my village. My secondary school was in Hit, and my high school was in Baghdad.

Knarr: Sir, what were you doing when the Coalition came?

Numan: As you know, we [my family] are businessmen. We have many factories. One of my brothers, Naim, was sentenced to death, during Saddam's era, in 1991. All of the tribes went to visit Saddam at the time to request his release or pardon from hanging. Saddam agreed and accepted their request. He remained there under threat of the death sentence for a year-and-a-half. When he was released from prison, he started working with me in my business. One of our friends was working with the Iraqi Intelligence. He told me that Naim, my brother, must get out of Iraq as soon as possible, because an order had been issued by the intelligence directorate to eliminate anybody who was against Saddam Hussein. This was three to four months before the invasion. At the time, Saddam was nervous. He thought that people who were against him were working with and dealing with the Americans to plot against the regime. We managed to remove his name from the black list and obtain papers to allow him to travel to Jordan. He remained in Jordan working in my company. I returned to Hit.

Knarr: Sir, what company were you running?

Numan: Doha, for General Trading. It is located in Sadun Street in the center of Baghdad. I travelled between Ramadi and Baghdad. I have two houses, one in Baghdad and one in Ramadi.

Knarr: What about Hit?

Numan: It is Hit, but we call it Ramadi, because it's easier. Because it is the center of the province. So I was in Hit. When the American Army entered, we chose Naim to become the mayor of Hit, because he had suffered during Saddam Hussein's era. Using the influence of his tribes, he could stabilize the province or the area. There were several attempts on Naim's life. General Keevner was the commander of Hit. I even have an appreciation letter from him for the work Naim had done in the Hit District.

Ms. Marry Hawkins: What was his name?

Numan: Keevner. After the invasion, in 2003, the Ba'ath Party and Al Qaeda started to work against him. There were no police at all. There were only a small number of

policemen. Our tribe protected his life. Naim and the commander of Hit, Keevner, cooperated well. I do not know Keevner's rank. When Keevner saw how many people were coming to protect Naim against Al Qaeda and the Ba'ath Party he said, "Who are these people, these huge numbers of people?" Naim said, "This is my tribe. They have all come to protect me." The American commander cooperated with them. He did not attack any of these people when they protected Naim. The reason the Americans did not protect my brother then was because they did not know who was their enemy or who was their friend, therefore the tribes protected him. [7:37]

Knarr: I assume it was Albu-Nimr?

Numan: Yes. After a while, Naim saw that the Hit District had stabilized. He felt his position as Mayor was minor and as such expected to be promoted to a better/higher position—possibly province governor. However, this did not happen. So he resigned, and went back to work within the family business.

Knarr: When was that?

Numan: In 2004. I can't remember the exact date, but around 2004.

Knarr: Who became the mayor then?

Numan: Somebody by the name of Ali Hamdi took over from Naim. When Ali Hamdi took over, Hit completely collapsed. Chaos reigned. Al Qaeda and the Ba'athist party were in control of Hit and he [Hamdi] could not maintain control of the area at all. Also we were hunted, either to be attacked or assassinated by both Al Qaeda and the Ba'athists. They bombed our factory. They stole all our cars at the factory. And we stayed, at that time here in Jordan, Amman. Of course, we are specifically concentrating on Anbar, in this interview now? Al Qaeda had infiltrated every aspect of our lives.

Knarr: Yes.

Numan: I was telling you that Al Qaeda had started to take control of the province. There was some kind of an agreement between the Ba'ath Party and members of Al Qaeda. I am sure you are aware of what happened then, the killing of the Anbaris. At the time there was no support for Al Qaeda in Hit.

Knarr: How did the Awakening start and how was it formed?

Numan: As you may know, every day we met at Sheikh Majed al-Sulayman's office, as he is the oldest head of the Anbari tribes. We used to visit him all the time in his office, in Sweifiehon the fifth circle [location within the city], this was before he moved to his new office. I used to attend these meetings.

Knarr: Sir, what is your relationship to Bezia?

Numan: He is my relative.

Mr. Munther Saiegh: Uncle. His father and Bezia's father are cousins, and his [Numan's] wife is Bezia's aunt, too.

Knarr: Okay.

Numan: At the time, Bezia was not at the meeting.

Munther: I said what date was it, and he said, "I'm not good at dates." "2007," I said. "No I don't think it was 2007, because I was there in 2006." [12:18]

Numan: When we sat at the meeting to discuss who was going to head the Sahawa, the Awakening, we were all a bit wary of who was going to announce leadership of the Awakening [or the Sahawa], because at the time we did not know who was going to back us or not. Sattar came to the meeting, and he said, "I can be the Awakening's leader."

Knarr: Here in Amman?

Numan: Amman, yes. So I asked him, "Why do you want to be the leader of the Awakening?" "Because I'm a gangster. I have no history and no reputation. If I fail, you already know of my reputation, that I'm a thief and a gangster, so I have no problem. If I succeed, you will be known as the tribe that helped me to succeed in attacking Al Qaeda."

So, one member from each tribe gave his backing [to Sattar]. The leader of the Awakening in our district, Hamid Ibrahim al Jaza, was nominated by my brother Naim. In reality he liberated Hit. He went deeply into Al Qaeda's pockets and made them suffer. Unfortunately, after he had completely cleared out Al Qaeda from the Hit district, the Americans detained Hamid Ibrahim. Until this minute he is still imprisoned by the Americans. There have also been several attempts on Hamid's life.

I would like to tell you a story: Street number 20 in Ramadi, which was outside of Hamid's jurisdiction, was a no-go area, nobody could ever go there, as Al Qaeda

was in complete control of this street. Hamid took his whole tribe, and his people, dressed as policeman and went into that street and liberated it from the Al Qaeda.
[16:24]

Knarr: Why was the street named 20 Street?

Numan: I have no idea. It's an old name. Since I was born it was called Street number 20.

Knarr: In Ramadi?

Numan: In Ramadi. And this is where Al Qaeda fell and was broken, when this street was liberated. After Hamid was imprisoned, Sattar was assassinated.

Ms. Marry Hawkins: How soon after?

Numan: Don't ask me dates. I don't know about dates. And then after the assassination of Sattar, the Awakening went in a different direction. It became political and commercial.

Munther: I said they went into the political process then directing themselves towards the provincial election. I think that was in 2008/2009. Numan says this.

Numan: Now we come to the next step. The problem was that people started to mistrust the Awakening—in the Anbari election they [the Awakening] only managed to gain one vote. At the same time, the Awakening tried to become commercial and tried to bring investors into the area. They met investors all over, both outside and inside the country. They brought the investors into the area, and they saw the situation was not stable. It was not ready [suitable] for investment—so they left. As such, it [the Awakening] was becoming a commercial business.

As you know, the governor of Anbar, Governor Kassim, was nominated by Ahmed Abu Risha. Governor Kassim was an engineer working in Dubai. Ahmed Abu-Risha chose him for one reason only—being that every project undertaken in Anbar would result in Ahmed Abu-Risha receiving a cut [share]. Ahmed Abu-Risha was originally a sergeant in the Republican Army during Saddam Hussein's era. So imagine somebody going from a being a mere sergeant to becoming the leader of a huge organization. Thus his job became how to rob the Anbaris and to send the money outside the country. Whatever question you have, I'm ready to discuss.
[20:19]

Knarr: The conferences you had in Amman, when did they start?

Numan: The first one was held in Jordan here. Then one in Dubai was held in 2006. And in Al Qatar, we held one in 2006 as well. Then in 2007, we did one at the Dead Sea.

Knarr: Dead Sea in 2007?

Numan: In 2007 we did. And we did one in Aqaba in 2009.

Knarr: Ah okay, you had a lot of them then. What were the results of those meetings? They were economic conferences and then...

Munther: The best economic conference we held was in 2009 by the PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team] and the MNF–West. We gathered a lot of the businessmen who came from Anbar and the US. We sat at the meeting. The governor of Anbar and his people were on one side and the investors were on the other side. On the first day of the meeting or the conference, there was a big disagreement between the investors and the Anbar Provincial Council. When the investors were talking about how to bring money into the province and how to stabilize it by bringing electricity, security, and water, Governor Mamoun's cousin stood up and started shouting, "You want to take our business away from us." And the PRT was sitting there. During that meeting the businessmen were telling the governor's men, "You're not telling us what to do." The governor's cousin was saying to the businessmen, "You don't tell us what to do. We run the province." And at the end, they had to tell them, "Look gentlemen, these men, they are not going to take your businesses. These men want to come here to invest in the province."

An American lecturer came from the States. He presented a study on how to start developing the province. We brought in one of the most famous Iraqi architects, his name is Husham Al Metfa'ee. He had the whole map of Anbar and how to develop the province of Anbar. He's had them since the 1970s, and he's kept them. And he gave a big lecture of how to start developing from one district to another. We start with the drains, the electricity, and then rebuild the city. He had all the maps with him ready to show the governor, but the governor wasn't interested, and neither were his people at that time. So it was both a success and a failure.

Knarr: Who was the person that came to make that presentation?

Munther: I don't know, but I can give you the PRT man's name, Mark Driscoll. He contacted some American friends who worked in United Arab Emirates. They had done the Nakhil project together. So his friend came and gave a lecture as well.

Numan: While at a conference in Dubai, one of the American companies proposed [to me] rebuilding Al Rawah Camp. People advised me, “Do not take this contract, because you cannot work in Rawah.” When we entered Rawah, we felt as if we were in ghost city. We said to the Americans, “Do not attack us and leave the city to us. We know how to defend ourselves.” When we took this project, the Anbaris could not go directly from Qaim to Ramadi. They had to go from Qaim to Akashat and then from Akashat to Ramadi. This adds an extra 300 kilometers. They could not go through Rawah to Hadithah to Ramadi. The previous Governor, Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi, succeeded by Mamoun, was originally from Qaim. However, he was assassinated on the road between Qaim and Rawah—and at the time he was the Governor. I’m telling you this to illustrate how dangerous the roads were.

When we undertook the project, Al Qaeda plotted to attack us. Naim, my brother, suffered mostly from it, as he was there. He was protected by his body guards, who were all members from our tribe. We alone liberated the road from Rawah, Hadithah, to Hit, neither the Awakening nor anybody else. It was only my people who made sure that this road was safe again. There were several attacks against our lives. At one time, we found five IEDs on the road, set in order to assassinate us. This was near the river. We saw a boat on the river in the near distance. The boat was not too far away. As we started moving, the boat started moving with us. When our car started moving, the boat started moving too. We started to watch. Why was the boat moving so fast? Our security personnel started shooting at the boat, and we captured the occupant. Our guards captured him and brought him to us. We started hitting him and then he confessed. He confessed that he had planted five IEDs, and took us to where they were. He had all the necessary equipment to detonate these IEDs with wires and everything. When he confessed, he told us the whereabouts of the remainder of his group. Our body guards then took over, and we captured the remaining members of this terrorist group and handed them over to the Americans. We were surprised that one of the men we had captured was seen three or four months later, back on the street again. He had been released from prison. [29:34]

Munther: I am asking him [Numan] to speak about the Hamza Battalion.

Numan: A while ago I spoke about Raja Nawaf. He’s from Albu-Mahal, from Al Qaim. As I said earlier, he was the governor before Mamoun; however, he was assassinated.

I'll give you his history later. The Hamza Battalion was started by members of Al Qaeda and groups who supported them—known as As Saieb. Due to conflicts of self gain between them, they divided into two. They started killing each other. I personally know of a gentleman by the name of Jumah and I know his whole history. Jumah is deceased now, but at the time, he contacted Raja Nawaf and said, "You are the man who can save our area. Why don't you help us to form a group to attack Al Qaeda?" At the time, when requested to form a group to fight Al Qaeda, Raja told Jumah to go ahead and form the group and he would obtain permission to do so and confirmation from the Americans that they would not be attacked by the Americans. He did this because Jumah was afraid that if he formed some sort of a group, he could subsequently be attacked by the Americans. However, Raja was the mayor of Qaim at the time. He said, "Don't worry. I will sort it out with the Americans and I will obtain protection from the Americans, too." So they [Jumah and Raja] gathered the former military army, all of the security, and other people from the area. They gathered them and led by Jumah started the first fight against Al Qaeda. Following this, Raja was nominated for governor. But on his way to Ramadi, he was kidnapped, arrested, and then assassinated. After his kidnap, Al Qaeda stated "You either dissolve the Hamza Battalion or we will kill Raja." That was the alternative given to them. [34:04]

Knarr: And this was Al Qaeda?

Numan: Al Qaeda, yes. There was a battle between Al Qaeda and the Americans in Rawa. Raja was found dead in one of those houses that had been under attack. When he was found his hands were tied.

In my opinion, and through my sources, not all of Al Qaeda's financial support comes from Iran. Syria financed and supported them too. There is a gentleman called Abdul Hadi al Ammar who was in control of Rawa and a member of Al Qaeda. He now resides in Syria. He is always in contact with and regularly meets gentleman called Abid al Summad al Ghourayri. Abid Summad al Ghourayri is the right-hand man [or second in command] for Izzat Ibrahim—he also resides in Syria.⁸ There is another gentleman by the name of Khalil al-Jundi who was highly ranked within Al Qaeda. You can now see him in Hit. He walks freely. Al Qaeda and other countries were financially supporting the Ba'athists. Neighboring

⁸ Izzat Ibrahim was Saddam's vice president and also deputy chairman for the Iraqi Revolution Command Council.

countries were giving financial support to Al Qaeda—Syria, Saudi Arabia, not just Iran. I will tell you something else—Ba’ath parties are freely engaging and meeting now in Anbar. Abid Summad al Ghourayri, who currently resides in Syria, directs them. The meetings continue to date. And if you want the rest of the names of the Ba’athist Party members who now freely meet in Anbar, I can bring these names easily.

Knarr: Yes.

Numan: As I said, Izzat Ibrahim’s groups are continuously meeting and instructions have been coming to them from Syria. All the instructions come from Mr. Abid al Summad.

Hawkins: So you’re talking about Al Qaeda and the Ba’athists currently meeting in Anbar. When you say the Ba’athists, do you mean the resistance?

Numan: No, the Ba’ath Party. The resistance is a different group.

Knarr: Okay.

Numan: They are different. But both groups are terrorists trying to destroy the country.

Munther: So I said, “No. We are talking about the Ba’athists, what is their aim?”

Numan: In those meetings, they are gathering themselves to regain control of the country. I will give an example now. Seventy percent of those who won the election—especially in Anbar Province—had been supported by the Ba’ath Party. And all of those members who won were in agreement with the Party. I can tell you that the Hal Party, [40:45], which is the solution party, is always meeting with the Ba’ath Party. And that the Hal Party is a part of the Iraqia Party.⁹ [43:24]

LtCol David Graves: In all the economic conferences that took place, did you see any kind of initiatives come out of those that took root or succeeded in Anbar?

Numan: Not at all. They came here to the conferences for a break, and then returned.

Graves: Does it go back to the 2009 conference where you talked about how they were scared of outside investment coming in and taking over their business? Is that kind of how they saw outside investment?

Numan: That’s what they felt. During that conference, most people were talking about stabilization and security. The main topic of the conference was electricity, and how

⁹ Translator’s note: the Iraqia Party is the Iraqi List Party.

the central government could help with the electricity supply and that it was the governor's job to try to restore electricity as soon as possible. Once electricity was restored, they believed stability would also be there. Then investors would come—farming or agricultural investors who would use electricity for their pumps or for other types of equipment such as weed spraying. However, they did not have electricity. Therefore everybody was concerned about electricity and how electricity could help to create stabilization. That was the main topic at the conference.

Maybe some people benefitted from the conference.

Munther: Of course. After that in 2009 and 2010 Ahmed Albu-Risha and MNF–West went to Bahrain. They were supposed to sign a contract with a Korean company for about 20 billion dollars. I was against MNF–W going, because if MNF–W went with Ahmed Albu-Risha, it showed the Anbaris that the MNF–W was showing support to only one man.¹⁰

Graves: What was the business?

Munther: They were supposed to bring investment into the province, but there were no results.

Graves: What was the company?

Munther: I was not involved, because I did not agree that the MNF–West should go and show support to a single man. This did not show support for the whole province.

Knarr: Who was there?

Munther: Lieutenant Colonel Richwine [G9, Engagements, MNF-W). And General Wissler [BrigGen John Wissler, Deputy Commander, MNF-W during OIF 9]..

Numan: Kevner.

Graves: What kind of business or investors would you like to see come into Anbar?

Numan: As you know, we have plenty of resources for investors in Anbar. As you know we now have gas, a huge amount of gas has been found. We also have cement and silicon. Phosphate has been invested in, but there are other resources that have not been invested in. Hit, for example, has a natural water source and underground chemicals. It is all wasted. It all goes directly to the river and is not used. There are

¹⁰ Munther is speaking from his own knowledge and experience from his time working with MNF-W.

so many natural resources. Dig down and see how many natural sources there are. Nobody is investing in them. In the Rutbah area there's silicon with 99 percent purity.

Graves: Why do you think there's no outside investment?

Numan: Any investor that comes is confronted by the Awakening [Party]. The Awakening wants a huge share before starting, so the investor leaves. That's it, they don't invest. We have plenty of projects and opportunities in Anbar.

Hawkins: Is the security there in Anbar for investment? [48:40]

Numan: If an investor enters an agreement or contract supported by a local company, the local company will ensure he is protected. Why from the area itself? Why should he partner with the local company? Because the local company knows the local people and contractors there and can advise the foreign investors who is good and who is bad—*bad* or *good* is not written on their foreheads!

Graves: Just nobody can get to the local companies right now?

Numan: Nothing, nothing, really. They're trying, but nothing has happened. We saw on television that the German Chamber of Commerce came to visit Ahmed Albu-Risha at his house. They subsequently invited Ahmed to Germany.

Graves: So they all go to him?

Numan: Yes.

Graves: How badly were your businesses affected by the invasion and the events that occurred?

Numan: Personally?

Graves: Yes. I assume you're trying to rebuild your business?

Numan: I have lost a huge amount. I am trying to. As I said earlier, I am trying to open a soda factory now. The factory is in Hit. I am trying to rebuild my company again. I am trying to obtain some contracts from the central government, if I can. Can we talk about businesses in Iraq or this is not something you want to hear?

Knarr: No, no, I want to hear about it.

Numan: The thing is, people now do not know how to work in Iraq. There are inexperienced companies trying to work in Iraq. Take for example tarring the roads. Every square meter of road with a five centimeter thickness costs \$13–14.

Nowadays, some companies are offering to do it for three dollars. So how could there be guaranteed quality? How could they do it? The contractor has to pay taxes and bribes. How could he get the job done? This means bad quality and the money is, in reality, being stolen. They cannot be doing the job right. This is how Iraq works at the moment. This is why I cannot work nowadays, in a corrupt manner. I have had my company for many years, and I will not work in a corrupt way at all. This saddens me. I built Rawah's Camp and the company names I gave earlier. I built Rawah Camp, as you know, and 12 police stations. When I finished the job, I handed them over to the Americans and was thanked by the Americans for the job that I had done. I have kept all the letters of appreciation from the Americans. Why? Because I do the job right. One can reduce prices, but the quality will not be the required quality for the job.

Graves: It sounds like you got Coalition assistance with doing those kinds of projects. Have you gotten any kind of assistance with your soda factory, like Coalition support on contracts?

Numan: No. I would just like to tell you that previously when my factory was working, the American Army, they used to come to my factory. They used to take boxes to drink, because they knew the quality of my soda. Every two or three days they would come in as they knew the purity and the quality (of my product). [01:01:08]

Hawkins: We heard that Al Qaeda currently has sleeper cells in Anbar. Are they asleep or are they active?

Numan: Sometimes they are asleep and sometimes they are awake and on the move. It depends on if there is law and order or not at the time. If the police arrest someone, they cannot be sure if he is from Al Qaeda or not. This is because when Al Qaeda starts moving or attacking, their faces are covered. If they're arrested by the police, witnesses are unable to identify them because they did not see their faces. So, until now they, Al Qaeda, work according to the current situation there. So you can never know who to arrest and there is often no case against them for arrest. In order to arrest a member of Al Qaeda, you have to have a judge's warrant. When you go to the judge, he will ask, "Have you got any evidence that this is the man?" As there is usually no evidence, he cannot issue the arrest warrant. This is how it goes. What I am saying is that there is no law and order.

Knarr: Sir, we really appreciate you taking the time to talk to us. This has been enlightening. Good luck with your businesses in Iraq.

Subject: Interview with Sheikh Bezi Majil Nijris al-Gaoud, Leader of the Albu-Nimr tribe

Sheikh Bezi Majil Nijris al-Gaoud is a leader of the Albu-Nimr tribe in the Hit area. He was interviewed at his business, the Jazeera Development Company in Amman. Bezi has four sons and four daughters—one of his daughters' sons is Hakeem, chief of police in Hit. His grandson is Hikmat, the mayor of Hit.

His tribe suffered under Saddam; Saddam killed his brother. The lack of security in Anbar is why the tribes needed to create the Awakening. He and a Mr. Roy of the CIA established Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha as the leader of the Awakening. There had been a conflict between two of the Dulaymi tribe leaders—Ahmer and Majed—for leadership of the Awakening, so Bezi side-stepped the conflict by bringing Sattar to the lead.



Sheikh Bezi, Albu-Nimr Tribe

Sheikh Bezi left Iraq in 2006 because of the violence, but returned periodically to check the status of his tribe and the Hit area.

When asked about Faisal Al-Gaoud, the former governor killed by an IED attack at a hotel in Baghdad, he indicated that Faisal was a cousin, married to his niece.

Sheikh Bezi was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, on 3 February 2011. Mr. Munther Saiegh provided the translation for the interview.

Dr. Bill Knarr: Sir, it's an honor for us to be here with you. You have done so much in Iraq. In fact, Martini [one of the ODA members who will be known as Martini or Marty in this paper] has told me everything that you have done not only in Hit, but also throughout the entire area, so it's an honor for us to have an opportunity to talk to you.

Sheikh Bezi Majil Nijris al-Gaoud: When the American Army first came into the province, two gentlemen visited me in my house. They came from Washington. When these gentlemen came from Washington, I told them that I come from Hit—this is my district, this is where I come from—and Ramadi. I informed them that my father used to own half of the peninsula there. They used to own the land from Kilo

18 to the Syrian border. These two gentlemen requested that I form a local government in Ramadi. I said at the time, "Let us wait, because the American Army has only just entered the province. Let us first wait and see before we form this local government, in order to see who is going to be in charge." We agreed and then met the American General, Mr. Tiplis [no further information], and we appointed a governor. We started working together to form a local government. I called all the tribal heads. We agreed that we would form a local government. We elected a council for the Anbar Province. This meeting was held in one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Ramadi. I was elected by the tribal heads and civilians who attended that meeting, and I immediately started working. I took politics as the priority for my mission. I called on Sheikh Majed Ali al-Sulayman and his cousin Sheikh Amir Ali al-Sulayman and asked them who would like to be the head of the council. They told me that Amir would like to be the head of the council, and we voted again. In that election, I gained 37 votes and Sheikh Amir had 22 votes, so I remained in my position. I stayed in my position so there would be no conflicts between us, as a tribe, and we started working together. [5:57]

We formed the council from all civilian sectors. The American forces were comfortable and pleased with our achievements. I started moving in two directions: firstly, to secure security in the province; secondly, to secure the American Army's positions. We worked very hard to achieve our goals at that time. I worked for seven months without a system, regime or security. I personally did not need the job. I did not take the job for the money, and I did not want to be the president, at the time. I, myself, am a tribal head. I am just like a president of a country. My tribe's population is in the neighborhood of 250,000. It was one of my suggestions to form the Awakening. Due to the lack of security and the lack of civilians that could defend us against Al Qaeda, we had to establish "something." We formed "something" that we called *the Awakening*. Our job was to help the Anbaris, to begin providing security in the province again, and to solve Iraqis' problems. At the time we wanted to invite an American company to start work in Anbar Province, to start work on reconstruction projects and to secure the oil fields. Our tribe was the first to initiate this mission. When he entered Hit, Martini was one of my friends.

We will talk about the Awakening later. As you know, the Americans invaded Iraq on 16 March 2003. A month later on 15 April, the first governing council was formed [in Ramadi]. The Awakening idea was started by me. Why was that? Because we had so much trouble on the highways. When we started to declare the

reasons for the American forces being present in our province, explaining who they were and why they had come, ordinary people assumed we were at war with the Americans. They [the ordinary people] neither listened to us nor understood us. We did not want to tell these people to fight, so we formed the Awakening to secure and defend us. At the time, we were a little afraid of the old regime's forces and police, so we had to replace them and bring the right people to secure us and our borders. Also there were insurgents coming into our areas. They came from Syria, Iran, and from up north. Thus we had the idea to form the Awakening to defend us and defend our lands. This was discussed and agreed between myself and Mr. Roy, from the CIA, who was the director in charge of Intelligence in the Middle East. Many suggestions, opinions, and ideas were sent to the White House. My idea was the only one that was accepted. That was a small job that I managed to do, to help, for the sake of Iraq. My wish was to see American companies coming into Iraq to start the redevelopment and reconstruction of Iraq. I'm not saying that because you are Americans sitting here. This is a fact. It was my wish that we start developing Iraq with American companies. However, when I saw the situation start to change in 2006, I left Iraq. Mr. Swannack was one of the [American] generals. [14:24]

Knarr: General Swannack, 82nd Airborne.

Bezi: Yes, he is my friend. Mr. Time [no further information] and Mr. Abizaid, they are all my friends. During revolutions in Fallujah, they shot at Abizaid. My relationship with the Americans were innocent relations. I did not take a cent from the Americans, not at all. I paid from my own pocket, but I would not take from them. It was impossible for me to receive money from the Americans. Martini helped us in some of our areas by creating some jobs and employment—they started work. All that we wanted to do was to respect the American forces when they entered our province. We did not resist them at all, because at the time Iraqis had thought and decided to rid themselves of Saddam Hussein's regime. We had fought with Iran. We had fought Iran for eight years, and we had taught them how to respect the Iraqi people and other nations, too. I just want to let you know that I don't want to lead you into thinking that the Iraqis do not respect regimes. We do respect other regimes and laws.

Mr. Munther Saiegh: I asked the sheikh to give us dates if possible. He has said all that I have been saying occurred between 2004 and 2006.

Bezi: All that I am saying is fact. What I am saying is the truth. If you want to speak to Mr. Roy, ask him about me, "Who is Bezi al-Gaoud?" As you know, I respect myself. Also as you may know, I am the head of my tribe. I respect anybody who comes to me and visits me. The American forces have made mistakes...engaging with some people who were not in authority and unknown to the Iraqis. They engaged with the Americans purely for the sake of destroying Iraq. [18:34]

Let's go to the subject of Albu-Risha, without envy or anger. Albu-Risha was one of my students, in fact Ahmed and Sattar and their father. Mr. Roy and I established Albu-Risha. Why? There was conflict amongst the Al Dulaym tribe. I wanted those people [the Albu Risha] as a force/friend to defend them. They are a small tribe of only 150 in number. I wanted people who could fight the battle. Albu Risha and Al Dulaym are cousins. There was conflict between me and the Dulaym tribe. Our politics require that I should bring people who understand the situation and were able to teach them [Al Dulaym] to understand too! These people were Albu Risha. So we elected Sattar to be head of the Awakening, but not to work the way he had previously nor as he presently is. We asked that he work under the American forces umbrella with the men who had volunteered to join him. I sent 4,000 volunteers from my tribe. My losses were 216 martyrs, seven of them were sheikhs. Sattar led first and then Ahmed took his place after he died. I have not met Ahmed Albu Risha since he became head of the Awakening. He thinks that he is a very important man. But before this, when Sattar was head of the Awakening, he used to come and visit me to take my opinion. Whatever I suggested at the time, he respected.

Our aim was and still is to look to the American administration to be fair to the Sunnis and to the whole Iraqi nation. Iran is working hard against us, working to break our relationship with the US administration. Imagine my son, Dr. Hamid, nominated himself for election under his party called Haquk. *Hakuk* means "right". He was elected by his tribe's people and other groups, but unfortunately the Islamic Party, the Awakening and, the government stole his votes from the election boxes. So what they did [the aforementioned], they forged the election at the time. They forged it. I, myself, stood in the Dora District of Baghdad, and I managed to get 5,012 Christian votes for my son 3,000 votes from the Sinek District, 3,000 votes from the Rashdiya District, 5,000 votes from the Adhamiyah District, 6,000 votes from the Green Zone, 4,000 votes from the Kadhimiya District and the Abu-Ghraib District, 12,000. They all chose and voted for my son. Then they [the Islamic party, the provincial government and the Awakening] went to our district, Hit and

Hadithah, and they defrauded all the votes against my son. I cannot imagine nor accept that the Minister of Finance, Rafa al-Essawi, could gain 80,000 votes. It was impossible for Rafa al-Essawi to gain so many votes. I know myself because I am the head of the tribe, and I know how many people supported me and supported our party. They forged the election papers and the Americans knew of our power and where we stood. Trust me, you should believe that the American forces used to come and stay the night amongst my tribe—sometimes they did not go back to their bases. They would stay the night with us and sit and eat and drink and then have breakfast with us. Nobody touched them, because I had stood with the American forces to rid us of the old regime and the bad era at the time. They all benefitted from the Americans, but I thank God that I have not benefitted. Thanks be to God that I have not been corrupted nor have stolen any money from Iraq, not at all.

[28:10]

Now the new Iraqi Government sent me an ID card. The Iraqi Government sent me a card to be collected from Anbar. As you can see on this card my previous employment was as a member of the Provincial Council. I am now retired. On the card my address is shown as Hit, and they now give me a pension...2.5 million Iraqi Dinars, which is approximately 2,000 dollars pension per month. But I have lost a huge amount. My house was attacked in Ramadi and my body guards were assassinated. I am not complaining at all, but this is for sure, it is impossible for me to say to the Americans, "Pull out." Because we need them to remain in Iraq, we want them to start working in Iraq. I'm a nationalist. I'm a nationalist, but I'm not a colonist. The fact is that that the Americans have to stay. We need to see a future for our new generation. We need to rebuild our country. That's what we need.

My late father, God bless his soul, used to resolve all the conflicts. People did not need to go to court. This was how the tribes operated. During Saddam Hussein's Era, we never insulted or made mistakes with anybody. When we used to visit Saddam Hussein, to request this or that from him, he implemented it immediately. Now men who are in central government and people who are in our province of Ramadi are not Iraqis. They are not patriotic Iraqis. Their aim is not an American aim, neither an American forces aim. They are spies at ground level for Iran. They are spies working for Iran, in the government and in our province, too. The Iraqi people have sacrificed long and hard, and now is the time for us to work hard together. For example, at the time, me and Marty [Matini] built a great relationship with the Anbaris. If one bullet was shot in the Husaybah District, I would take a

plane at my own expense to go and check what it was. We worked hard for our country and for our freedom. We are here to make friends with other nations for a brighter future and for change. My grandfather Nejus al-Gaoud was the prince of the western area. He fought against the British for two years, and he was victorious. He remained there until King Fasil was overthrown. The King asked him, “What do you request of me?” He answered, “Be a King to Iraq, and deal with the Iraqis as they are your subjects. Work hard for them.” This is history, I have got it. I have got it with me. This was written by a lady called Ms. Bell, and other writers.

Knarr: *The Desert Queen*.

Bezi: And I’ve got it with me. And Leachman.

Knarr: Colonel Leachman?

Bezi: And—I forgot the other man’s name. We undertook our role with all our hearts, and trust in the Iraqi people, and we never cheated nor were we corrupt. This is only the beginning and God willing, we shall remain friends. Now I am working with American oil companies to bring them into Iraq and other trading and supply companies to bring rice and other goods to Iraq. [35:07]

Munther: I asked the sheikh if he keeps on going in and out of Iraq, he said, “Yes.”

Bezi: I always go and come. Maliki is a friend of mine, the Prime Minister of Iraq. Him and Ammar Al Hakeem, Abdul Mehdi [he was the Iraqi Vice president at the time?] Talabani, the President of Iraq. They are all friends of mine, as well as Barzani [the President of Kurdistan].

Knarr: What about Abdul Qadir who was the Minister of Defense?

Bezi: Yeah, he is a very nice man. If you [the Americans] can support him, you will succeed. If he returns to the Ministry of Defense you will succeed. I have nominated him to Mr. Zalamy Khalilzad [former US ambassador to Iraq].

Knarr: Sa’dun Dulaymi?

Bezi: Sa’dun Dulaymi, I don’t prefer him, be wary.

Knarr: In 2005, the Desert Protectors were formed. I understand that the Albu-Nimr and Albu-Mahal worked together to form the Desert Protectors.

Bezi: Yes.

Knarr: Sir, can you talk about that?

Bezi: We requested forming an Iraqi Army. Sa'dun Dulamyi and the Americans refused to form an Iraqi Army. At the time, I nominated 1,500 volunteers. We started training them in the Al Asad Base. Then I nominated another thousand into Ramadi City. The insurgents killed 29 of them.

Knarr: When was that?

Bezi: In 2005, in central Ramadi. From Hadithah, I chose 250 volunteers. And after the training, Mr. Tiplis, who was in contact with me, used to watch them graduate [with me], to witness their graduation. They were in Ramadi, and I took them to al Asad.

Knarr: I thought you said something about Baghdadi?

Bezi: Baghdadi is Al Asad Base. We call it that. It's the same. Before, it use to be called Baghdadi Base. That's the original, Baghdadi.

Knarr: Okay.

Bezi: *[In English]* I told Tiplis, 250,000 dollars per year, you must pay per month, you must pay. He said, "Okay, I'm ready to pay." He stayed there and he's working, good man. I have seen him. He and Mr. Martini, Swannack, and Abizaid. Abizaid, where is he now?

Knarr: Abizaid retired from the Army. But he still works like you. He works very hard.

Bezi: *[In English]* Of course. And he's a friend. Abizaid, he originated from Lebanon.

Knarr: Ah yes, Lebanon.

Munther: So that's why I say he's just like Pete. So one day you will become a general, and we will say, "Oh, General Pete, do you remember..."

Bezi: *[In English]* I have a street in America. Arizona. It is a street of Albu-Nimr Tribe. Just now they were talking with me on the telephone.

Knarr: That's good. Martini talked about an operation called SHURTA NASIR or POLICE VICTORY. Do you remember that? It was in February of 2007.

Bezi: *[In English]* Yes. I mix up, there are so many things. Me and Martini, we did a lot of work. POLICE VICTORY was in Hit. [42:09]

Knarr: Yes, yes, it was in Hit.

Bezi: All the volunteers or the policemen were from Albu-Nimr tribe. Martini became from the Albu-Nimr tribe as well.

Knarr: Ah, he became a tribesman.

Man: Honorary tribesman.

Bezi: [*In English*] So now he's our friend and he became a member of the Albu-Nimr tribe. We ask him to pay for the tribe. There is some tribe tax. When a tribal member kills somebody, he comes to me and he told me "I killed this man." I go to visit his family, and I pay them. You see?

Knarr: Yes.

Bezi: [*In English*] This money is divided for all the tribe. This is just an example. Because Martini is from the tribe now, if Martini has assassinated or killed anybody, he will have to pay.

Knarr: He will have to go to the family.

Bezi: [*In English*] To the sheikhs or to the family and give them some money so they will not judge him. Martini has to pay some money every time, because somebody has to pay. Where is Martini now?

Knarr: He is at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He's still in the Army. He's still with the 5th Special Forces Group. So he is still with the same units that he was with when he saw you.

Knarr: Do you recall some of the insurgents who were working in your area? Like the 1920 Brigade and Al Qaeda?

Bezi: They are all gone. None are left in the area now. They have all been killed.

The 20th Revolution took over Hit from the Americans. So I called my tribe, the Albu-Nimr tribe, at night and there was an American with them. We captured them all. We captured them all in one morning. We went in there and captured them all and killed some, and we liberated Hit from them. They're all gone, finished.

Now what's important is the red line now, which is Iran. This [border] is the red line. When we started the Awakening, our idea was to help the American forces secure our borders. This is something you should know the purpose of. You see, when we started the Awakening, the idea was to help the Americans on the border between Syria and Iraq. The other point was how to secure the cities once the American forces pulled back into their bases, whilst the Awakening would secure the cities and towns. Now there are big conflicts amongst the members of the Awakening. There are massive conflicts. The problem with the Awakening is that

no one is paying their salaries. They [the members] have not been paid by their leaders. When they were being paid by the Coalition, the leaders were not paying the Awakening members. Now Albu-Risha has got a company in Dubai. He's has many companies in Iraq and Dubai, and is representing himself as a leader. And as you know, the size of his tribe is only 150 people. His tribe was formed after the American's gave him money and he started hiring people to start forming his tribe. These people, all 150 of them, were bought by him after the American's gave their money.

Knarr: Did you work with Sheikh Sabah to form and secure the border areas? [49:49]

Bezi: [*In English*] Yeah, Sabah, we are relatives. I am his uncle.

Sabah Mahal, son of Nimr. Albu-Nimr is the head and the Mahal is a branch. Hamid Jubour do you know him?

Knarr: Hamid Jabour, I have not met him. I don't know him.

Bezi: [*In English*] This is Albu-Souda.

Knarr: Albu Souda?

Bezi: [*In English*] This is also my tribe.

I have all Anbar. I have 30 percent of Salah ad-Din, and another 20 percent from Mosul also.

Knarr: This is interesting.

Bezi: [*In English*] Those are all my people. I have here also about 1,500 families in Jordan. And in Syria I have eight villages. I have in Turkey, Mardin. Also I have a bond sheikh there in Mardin and one in Syria and one in Palestine, Nablus. I have 25,000 people. You see, I'm here for all these people.

I was in Baghdad, I couldn't contact them. But when I come here, I contact all these people—Baghdad, Mosul, Ramadi, and Syria. This is the people of Albu-Nimr. We are related now.

Munther: I said Al Ta'ee tribe, he said, "Yes. We are related".

Bezi: This is the problem. Due to the size of my tribe, I need some of my tribes people to be in [positions of power such as] police chiefs, in government, in courts, and in some governmental establishments. Because my people have listened to me, not one bullet was fired at the Americans. They listened to me. I said to be quiet and respect

the Americans and that we were friends with the Americans. Everybody respected my word. But now my people are unemployed. They have not gained anything—unlike other tribes. All that they have gained is my respect. Other tribes have not suffered. My tribe is the only one that has suffered; not even their salaries have been paid. However, they have listened to my word and have not shot at or fought with the Americans. But what have they gained?

Iraqis, we are historians. We have our civilization and we have our past. Look at the head of your tribe [directed at Munther]. He came to Iraq 2,300 years ago. We don't want to blame the American Army or the American administration for what has happened in Iraq. Twice Maliki came here asking that I go back with him to Iraq. I said, "Yes, I'll go back to Iraq. I'll come for a visit, yes. However, the situation is not right for me to return and reside there. Also, the fact that my house was demolished and my guards were killed by insurgents, I will not go back." [56:12]

Knarr: I understand.

Bezi: [*In English*] All over application to General Allen, I told him when he was responsible for Ramadi. At the time, I asked General Allen for compensation because of what had happened to my house. From then until now I have not heard anything. This is the general situation now. Ahmed Albu-Risha—what was he? A cleric in the Anbar Province, and from that position he became the head of the Awakening. Mr. Sa'dun Juwayr brought Albu-Risha and now they want to nominate Sa'dun Juwayr as the Minister of Defense. I want to ask a question.

Knarr: Yes, sir.

Bezi: Do you think those who deal with and speak to the Iranians are better than those who deal with, speak to, and negotiate with the Americans?

Knarr: I certainly can't speak to policy, but I understand some of the issues with the Iranians.

Bezi: Iraqi people and the Iraqi nation has suffered a lot. I wish that you had seen Iraqis during Saddam Hussein's era [they were better off]. Now they suffer politically. Their oil has been stolen, and their property is gone. People give wrong information to the Americans. Some people abuse their positions for self gain, thus betraying their positions and their people.

I will tell you a story about Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein was my friend. Four members of my tribe were due to be hanged. I went to Saddam Hussein and I told

him, “These men are from my tribe, and I want them back, as the jury wrongly convicted them. I will give you a list with the names of 204 people who are due to be hanged.” Saddam said “If you want me to release them all, I will release all of them now.” I agreed for him to release all 204 of them. Thus Saddam Hussein released them all. I saved all 204 lives. At one time, I heard that one of the Anbaris had told the Americans that Bezi al-Gaoud was Saddam Hussein’s friend. I said, “Okay, this is my President. Now you are American. You go to fight with Bush? No, because you respect yourself and because he’s your President. That is law.” General Abizaid and Swannack were at that meeting when I was accused of being a friend of Saddam Hussein’s. The man who reported me as a friend of Saddam Hussein’s was a man I had saved from being hanged, and he then reported me as a friend [of Saddam’s]. At the time, Saddam Hussein was my President. People talk as they like.

I tell you that Ramadi or the Anbar Province is gone now, wasted, finished. Mr. Tiplis and I sat down to form three districts in Anbar. The first district was to be the western side and the next district was to be Ramadi and its surroundings. The third district was to be Fallujah. Why? Because Fallujah’s people do not listen to, neither respect nor obey Ramadi’s people and the western area is not wanted by the Ramadis—this is a secret that I am telling you now—Why [am I telling you this]?

When the central government’s budget is allocated, they will say there should be a project in Fallujah, for example, also a project in Ramadi and the western side, too. And why is that? Because when the province receives the budget it can be distributed amongst these three districts. Now what actually happens when the budget comes is that it is allocated to the province as a whole. So the governor’s people and those in charge steal most of the money—they might build a small road in Fallujah now or a school. They might also build a small clinic in Ramadi, and then steal the remainder of the money. This is the problem we are now facing; everybody is stealing our budget allocated from the central government. However, if we had divided the province, each district would have a separate budget. This is why the Anbaris started fighting the American forces. It started in Fallujah and spread to other areas. This is why we suggested we have the three districts—each district would have its own budget, which would come straight from the central government to those three areas. Thereby every district would have its own budget to start rebuilding and redeveloping the area. However, now it comes to one man only. He steals the money and nothing is being achieved. At the time, the population

of Fallujah was 415,000, now it is 500,000. Ramadi's is 450,000 and the western area's is 850,000. I come from the population of 850,000. If you look at Anbar Province [as a whole], do you know how many members of parliament we have in the central government? We have 14 members of parliament only. [1:07:22]

Knarr: It's supposed to be one per 100,000 or 20.

Bezi: We must have 18. We demand our rights. When we demand our rights, they start throwing stones at us. Whatever you ask me I am ready to talk about.

LtCol David Graves: In 2006, General Reist came to pay his respects to your late son Talal. What kind of message did that send everybody who was there?

Bezi: No one said anything. They heard that the [US] Deputy Commander and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense and other members from the American Embassy had attended his wake. We took photographs and do not forget those who attended. Everybody knew I was friends with the Americans, and there were no problems, especially from my tribe. One thing I would like to tell you is that my son Talal did not die of heart problems. He sacrificed his life for Iraq. He was poisoned. We are still searching for and following up to confirm who assassinated him. God Bless his soul, Talal's aim was that the Americans would sit down with the Ba'athists and become friends. God Bless his soul, he was a man who hated bloodshed and killing. The Americans have always visited us. They [the media] wrote about us in the Jordanian newspaper a few days ago that we are American agents. However, I do not see any problems with my meeting Americans. To me I don't mind when they talk about us, because I am working for my country. I am negotiating with the American's to make them understand my people and our needs. So it is no problem. Whoever wants to talk about me, us, or my tribe does not bother me whatsoever.

I believe that when the Americans started the war against Iraq, they did not know anything about Iraqis or their traditions. The Iraqi people are a loyal, trusting people, welcoming people. As Arabs we love and welcome other nations. Our origins [roots] are native Arab we do not betray anyone. Why did they call us Iraq? We are the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar and Noah. We are the finest of all nations. We have many different religions in Iraq—Akadaan and Salafi. We have many different types of religions. We are very civilized. You will never see another nation like this. We accept and respect sacrifice, we may starve but will never show it. I would rather die than betray myself. These are the Iraqi people. We want to

trust each other. Tomorrow if we go to conduct a survey of the Iraqi people, I can assure you that 90 percent of the Iraqi people do not want war. They do not want war at all. They are peaceful. They want to work. They want to plant. They want to study. They want to be educated. This is the Iraqi nation. Thank you for your visit and hopefully we will continue with our engagements. Whenever you come to Jordan, you are most welcome to come here and visit me. I am glad and happy to see you. Do you have anything else to say? Do you have any questions?

Ms. Mary Hawkins: What role did Fasal Al Gaoud play in the Awakening?

Bezi: He was a member in the Awakening. He's my uncle.

Hawkins: Okay.

Bezi: Fasal or Faisal?

Knarr: The Governor...

Bezi: Ah, Fasal! Fasal is my cousin. Fasal al Gaoud is my cousin. Fasal was married to my niece, Emman. He suffered during Saddam Hussein's era—Saddam killed his brother and his cousin. Saddam Hussein invited him to his palace and apologized to him for what had happened to his brother, he also gave him money. He registered as a Ba'athist. He became a division member. He was glad to see the American forces enter Iraq, and he joined them immediately. He and other highly influential Ba'athists joined the American forces and they then claimed they had been helping the Americans to liberate Iraq. Fasal became a governor without asking my opinion. I said to others to leave them as he is. Let him live his life. I am sure although I cannot 100 percent confirm, but I think the Iraqi government assassinated him. Maybe Albu-Risha was involved in it too, because he [Fasal] was against them [Albu Risha] in his last few days. The Albu Risha assassinate people they do not like. As you may or may not know, they [Albu Risha] stole seven billion Iraqi dinars from the treasury, and the American Army actually recovered and returned it. This is our relationship with Fasal, Fasal's history, and his relationship with others. It's my honor that one of my cousins or relatives or brother is somebody who is responsible and in charge, who cares about his people and his nation. My cousin Mohammed was assassinated, martyred 20 days ago. I count him a martyr because he died for the sake of his country and his people. Mohammed's father was in the Awakening. And I can agree with you [with Ms. Hawkins] that Fasal wanted the Awakening, and that's why they assassinated him—maybe he wanted to lead the Awakening as well.

Hawkins: How many sons does he have?

Bezi: I have four sons and four daughters and two wives. One is deceased, and one remains with me. I am the king,

Knarr: This is Zuwayah up here [referring to a map].

Bezi: Yeah, this is Zuwayah. This one. You know we are from Talaswata. This is the Black Hill.

Knarr: Okay.

Bezi: Albu-Nimr does something from this point to the Syrian Border, you see? And to the Salah ad-Din border. We have [Shaneah?]. Sa'bah has Al Qaim. Also this is our people. We have a lot of people, too many!

Munther: How do you sleep with all this responsibility?

Bezi: You know how the pope is? I'm just like the pope to them.

Knarr: Sir, I'd like to give you that token of our appreciation as a symbol of our commitment to make sure your voice is heard to the students in the various schools back in the United States.

Bezi: Thank you. God will help you. It's a pleasure seeing you here, and give my regard to Mr. John Allen. Tell him we are ready for him when he wants to visit us. He found us as a friends. We have a lot of things we want to do for the Iraq. But when we see him, maybe we'll encourage more people to talk with him. We are not against Americans. We like the American people, because I have people in America. I have my tribe in America.

Knarr: Thank you, sir.

Appendix C. Who's Who

Interviewees

Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid Muhammad al-Jughayfi, Mayor of Hadithah

Abdul Qadir Mohammed Jassim Obeidi al-Mifarji, General, Minister of Defense from 2006 to present, preceded by Dr. Sadun al-Dulaymi, Sunni Arab, born in Ramadi

Abdullah Jallal Mukhlif al-Faraji, Head of Sunni Endowment for Anbar Province, Regent Sheikh of the Albu-Faraj tribe; Ramadi City Council Member

Adel, Brigadier General, Commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division

Ahmad Jelayan Khalaf, former Desert Protector

Ahmed Bezia Fteikhan al-Rishawi, Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Risha tribe, President of Muttamar Sahawat al-Iraq (MSI)

Ahmed Hamid Sharqi, Colonel, Chief, North Ramadi Police Precinct

Aum Ahmed, resident of Al Qaim

Babakir Badr-khan Shawat al-Zubari, General, Chief of Staff for the Joint Forces Command, Studied at the Iraqi Military Academy in Baghdad in 1969, served in the Kurdish Peshmerga 1973–91; Escaped to Iran as a political refugee in 1975; Acting Commanding General of Iraqi Joint Headquarters, 2004–05; Chief of Staff, Iraqi Joint Headquarters, 2005 to present

Bakhit Arak Ali, Lieutenant Colonel, Commander, Qatana Police Station, Ramadi

Bezi Mujjil Nijris al-Gaoud al-Nimrawi, eldest Sheikh of the Albu-Nimr tribe; one of the first tribal leaders to offer to arm tribesmen and support Coalition (Summer 2003); turned down by CPA over concerns of creating tribal militias; lives in Amman, Jordan

Farouq Tareh Harden al-Jughayfi, Colonel, Police Chief Hadithah

Hareth al-Dhari, (Dr.) Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) and Zobai tribe

Ibrahim al-Jaafari, former Iraqi Prime Minister, April 2005 to May 2006

Ismael Sha Hamid Dulaymi, staff Brigadier General Former Commander 28th Iraqi Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division

Jalal al-Gaoud, Iraqi Businessman from Hit, residing in Jordan

Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi, sheikh of the Albu-Souda tribe

Kurdi Rafee Farhan Al-Mahalawi, lower tier sheikh of Albu-Mahal tribe

Mahmood al-Janabi, a leader with the Jaish al-Islami (Islamic Army) insurgent group

Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, Sheikh of the Dulaymi Confederation

Mamoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Alwani, former Governor of Anbar; Anbar Provincial Council Member; Chairman of the Provincial Council's Economic Committee

Mishan Abbas Muhammad al-Jumayli, Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Jumayli tribe

Mohammed Al-Saady, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation. Recently elected to the new Parliament.

Mukhlis Shadhan Ibrahim al-Mahalawi, Desert Protectors commander

Nathem al-Jabouri, former member of AQI

Numan al-Gaoud, businessman and member of the Albu-Nimr tribe in Hit

Raad Majid Rashid al-Hamdani, Lieutenant General, Retired Republican Guard Commander; Leader of the FRE Movement to Reintegrate with GOI

Raja Farhan, mayor of Al Qaim

Sa'fa Al-Sheikh, National Security Advisor

Sa'id al-Jughayfi, Sheikh of the Jughayfi tribe in Hadithah

Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahren al-Shurji al-Aziz, principal Sheik of the Albu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim

Sadun Juwayr Farhan al-Rishawi al-Dulaymi, Doctor, Former Minister of Defense 2005/2006, Doctorate in Social Psychology from United Kingdom's Keele University

Said Flayyah Othman al-Jughayfi, contesting Sheikh, Albu-Jughayfi, one of the top 17 influential tribes in Anbar, Hadithah

Sha'ban Barzan Himrin, Colonel, former Chief of Police in Baghdadi

Sheikh Ali Hatim Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman al-Assafi al-Dulaymi, President of the Common Council of Iraqi and Arab Sheikhs, Lineal Sheikh-in-waiting of the Albu-Assaf tribe, Founder of the Iraqi National Front

Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi tribe located in Fallujah

Thamer Kadhemi al Tamimi, closely associated with JAI; one of the first and premier Sahawa leaders in Baghdad

Thamir Ibrahim Tahir al-Assafi, Doctor, Head of the Muslim Ulema Council (MUC) for Anbar and Senior Theologian to Sunni Waqf; Ramadi City Council member; Al-Anbar University (AAU) Professor of Religious Studies; Mutammar Sahawat al-Iraq (MSI) office of Religious Affairs

Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobi, Deputy Governor, on the Awakening

Other Notable People

Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha, Leader of the Awakening movement in the Al Anbar Area, assassinated 13 September 2007

Abdullah al-Janabi, close supporter, organizer, and religious advisor to many of the insurgent groups growing in and around Fallujah during the summer of 2003; became one of the key influential insurgent leaders during both battles of Fallujah (2004)

Abu Ayyub al-Masri, replaced Zarqawi as leader of AQI following the former's death in June 2006; created Islamic State of Iraq in October 2006

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Jordanian-born founder of *Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wa'al Jihad* (JTJ – Group of Monotheism and Holy War) (2003) and later Al-Qaeda in Iraq (October 2004); killed in Coalition airstrike in June 2006

Amer Abd al-Jabbar Ali Sulayman al-Assafi al-Dulaymi, Co-Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Assaf tribe and Co-Sheikh General of the Dulaymi Confederation

Faisal al-Gaoud, former Sheikh of Albu-Nimr; father of Sheikh Fasal

Fasal Rakan Nejris, Sheikh of Albu-Nimr tribe; appointed governor of Anbar by IIG November 2004; replaced as governor by Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi (May 2005); Awakening Council leader; died 25 June 2007 in Mansour Hotel bombing

Hamid Farhan al-Heiss, from the Albu-Thiyab tribe; member of the Anbar Salvation Council; don't confuse him with his brother, Sheikh Muhammad Farhan al-Heiss and contesting lineal sheikh of the Albu-Thiyab tribe

Hatim Razzaq, current Sheikh of Albu-Nimr

Hikmat Jubayir, mayor of Hit; Sheikh of Albu-Nimr tribe

Karim Burjis al-Rawi, former governor of Anbar Province (April 2003–August 2004); forced to resign after his sons were kidnapped; replaced by Mohammad Awad

Khalid al Irak al-Jassim, leader of the Albu-Ali Jassim tribe, killed by AQI

Khalid Araq Ataymi al-Iliyawi, well respected Ali Jassim tribal leader brutally murdered by AQI (August 2006); his body was hidden preventing burial for three days, violating both tribal and Islamic custom; catalyst for tribal resistance to AQI in the Ramadi area

Lawrence Mutib Mahruth al-Hathal al-Aniza, Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Aniza tribe, Mayor of Nukhayb, Anbar, Iraq

Mudhir Abdul Karim Thiab al-Kharbit, son of Sheikh Malik; assumed leadership of clan upon his father's death; Ba'athist supporter and strongly anti-Coalition following his father's death

Muhammad Mahmoud Latif, leader of the 1920 Revolutionary Brigades and Ramadi Shura council

Muqtada al-Sadr, Shia cleric and leader of the Mahdi Militia

Naim Abd al-Muhsin al-Gaoud, appointed by Coalition forces as first mayor of Hit (April 2004)

Nayil al-Jughayfi, seized control of Hadithah during initial invasion; subsequently recognized by Coalition as first mayor (April 2004)

Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi, appointed governor of Anbar by newly-elected provincial council (May 2005); kidnapped by extremist elements to influence Albu-Mahal to stop fighting AQI; found dead in a home after Coalition-insurgent fighting in the area; replaced by Mamoun Sami Rasheed

Razak Salim Hamza, former commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division

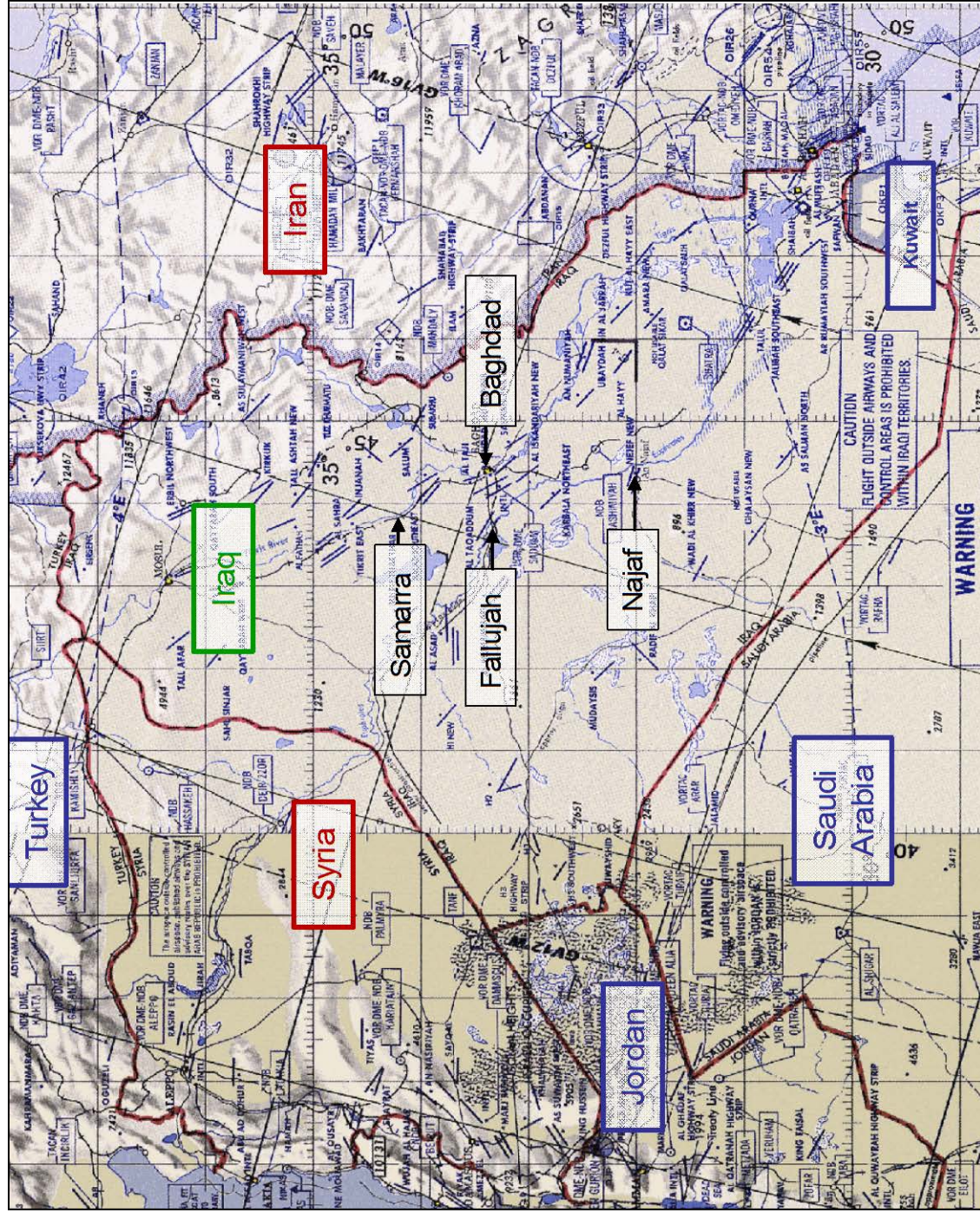
Sheikh Malik al-Kharbit, tribal leader of the Khalifawi (Ramadi area); head of one of the most important families in the powerful Dulaymi tribal federation; cooperated with Coalition forces before the invasion; tragically killed along with between 17 and 22 family members, including women and children during mistaken Coalition airstrike on his compound (11 April 2004); cited as motivating factor turning Ramadi-area tribes against Coalition

Talal al-Gaoud, son of Bezi al-Gaoud; worked with Marines engagements in Jordan in 2004; died suddenly in 2006

Tariq Abdul Wahab Jasim, former Commander Iraqi First Division

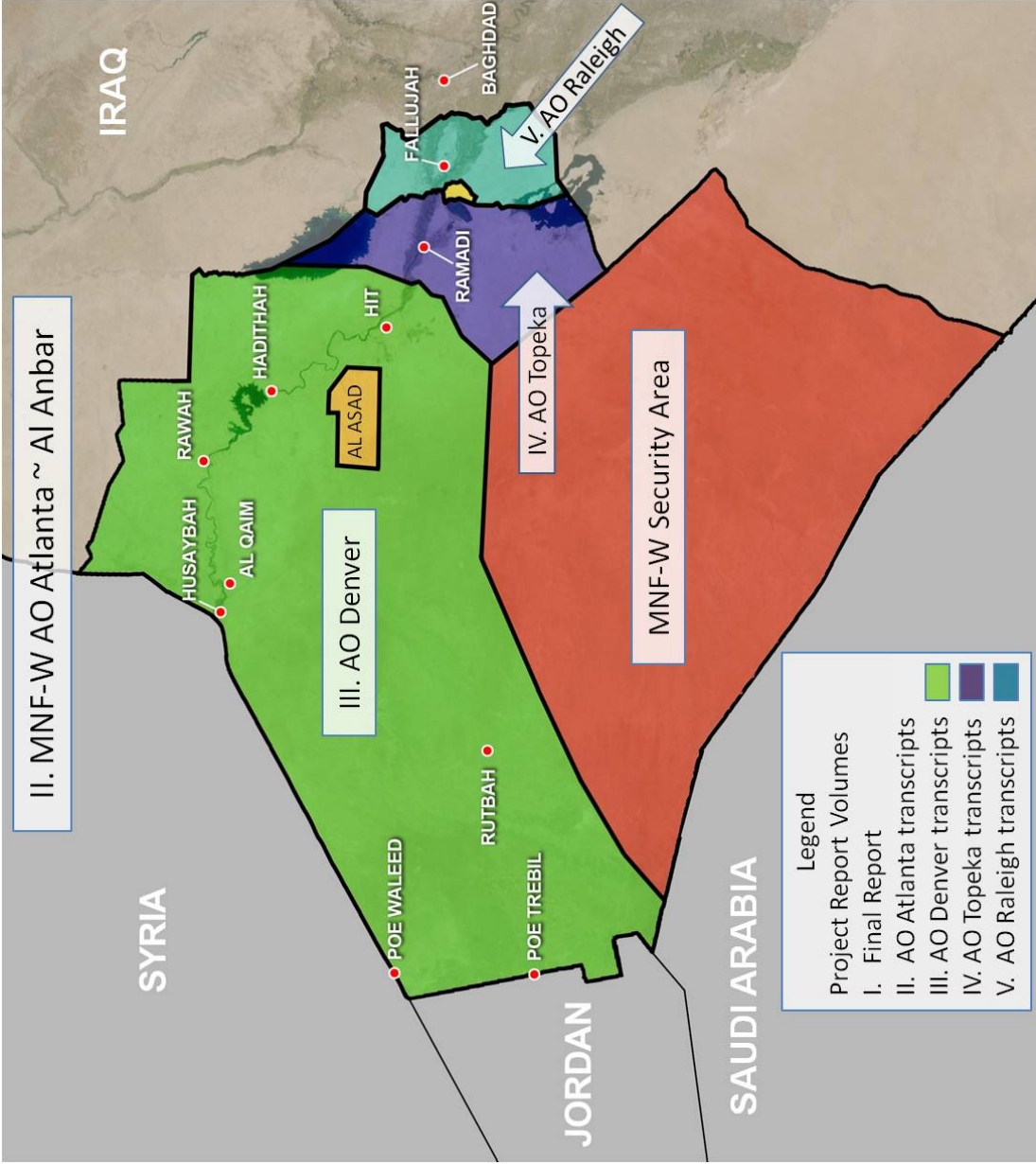
Appendix D. Maps

Note: North is towards the top of all maps as you read them.



Base map courtesy of National Geospatial Agency

Figure D-1. Map of Iraq and its neighbors



Area of Operation boundaries extracted from map courtesy of I-MEF and USMC History Division

Figure D-2. Map of military operational areas in Iraq during 2004

1. 2003: From Victory to Chaos – Sowing the Seeds of an Insurgency
2. 2004: The Year Starts and Ends Headlining Fallujah

Western Euphrates River Valley – WERV

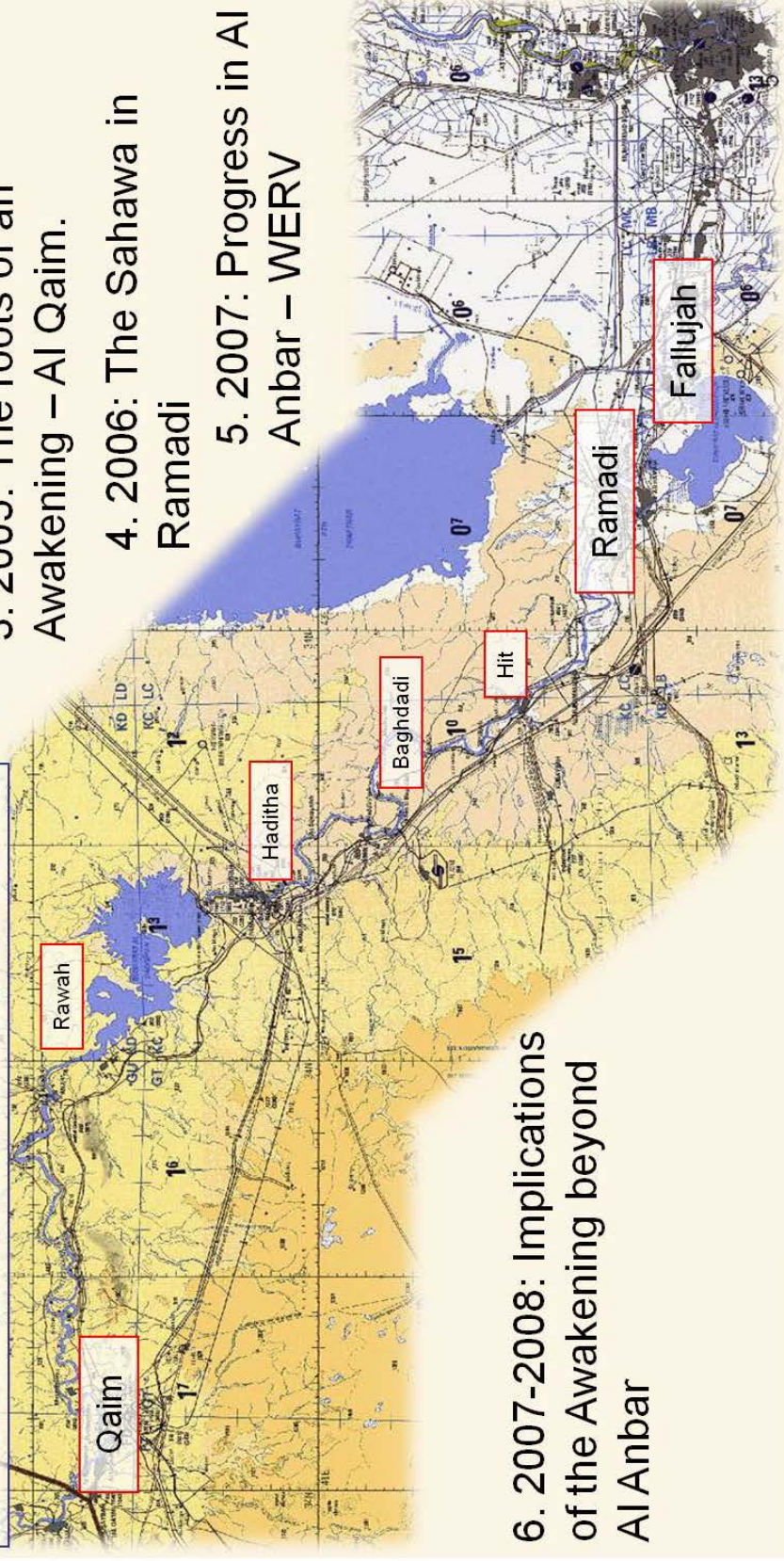


Figure D-3. Phases of the Al Anbar Awakening

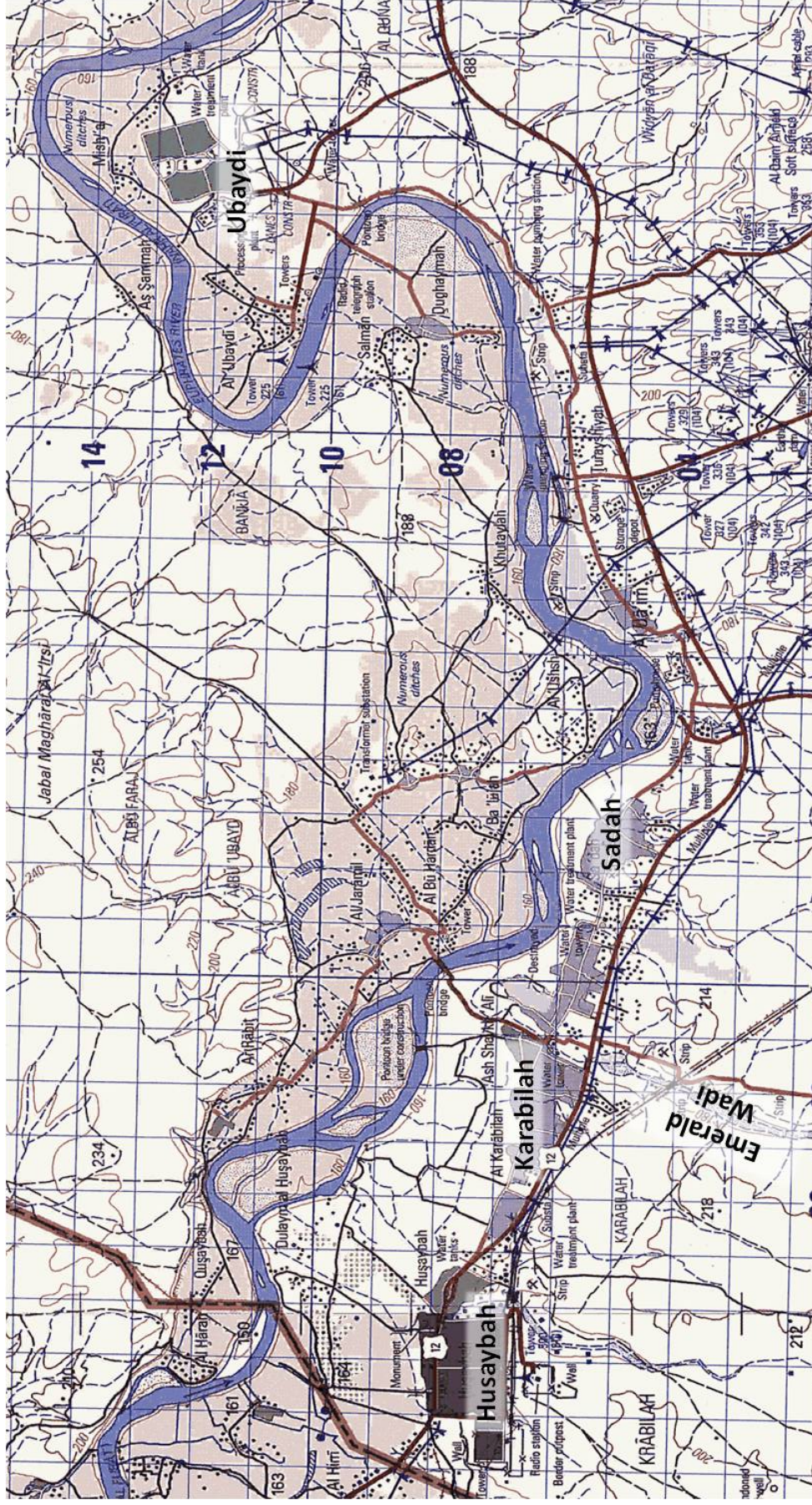


Figure D-4. Map of Al Qaim Area

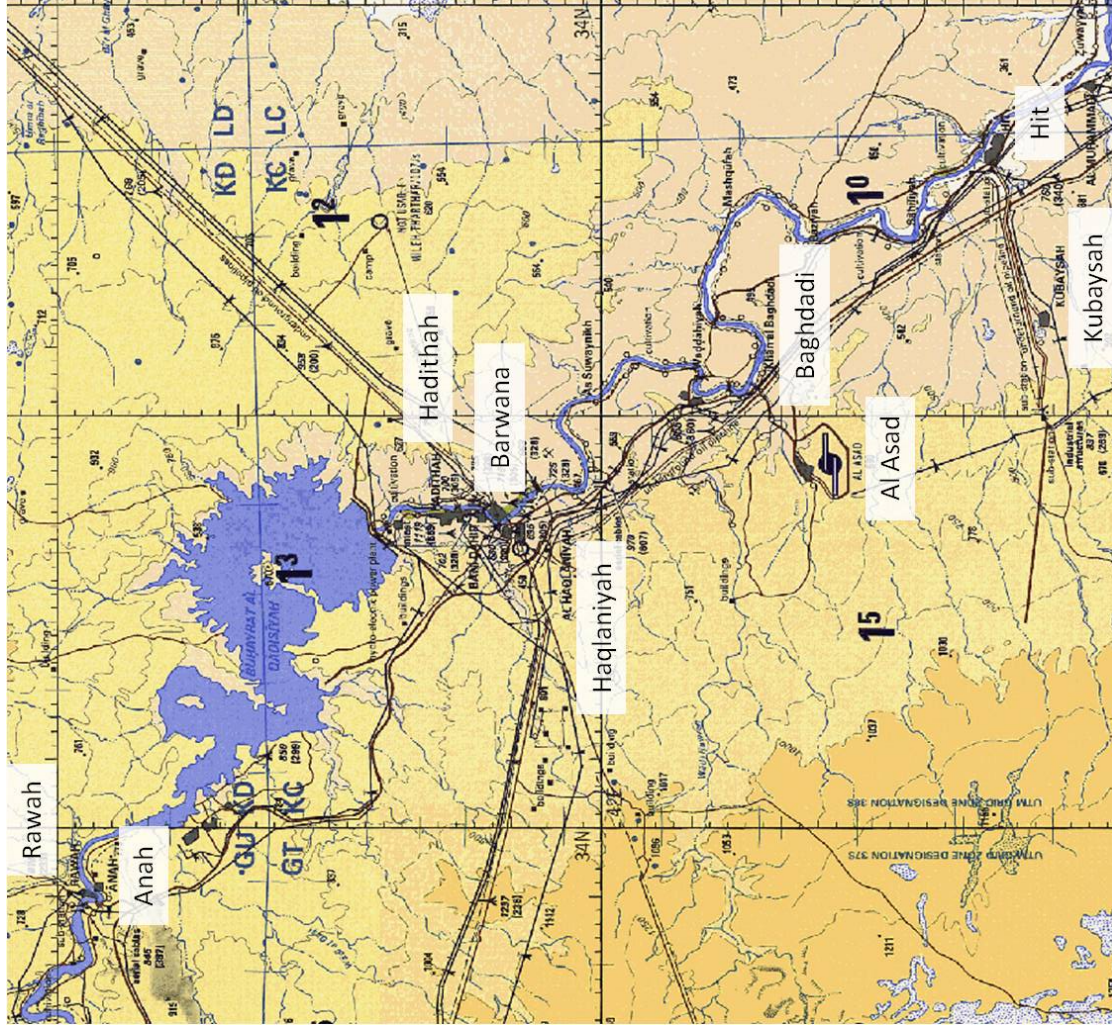
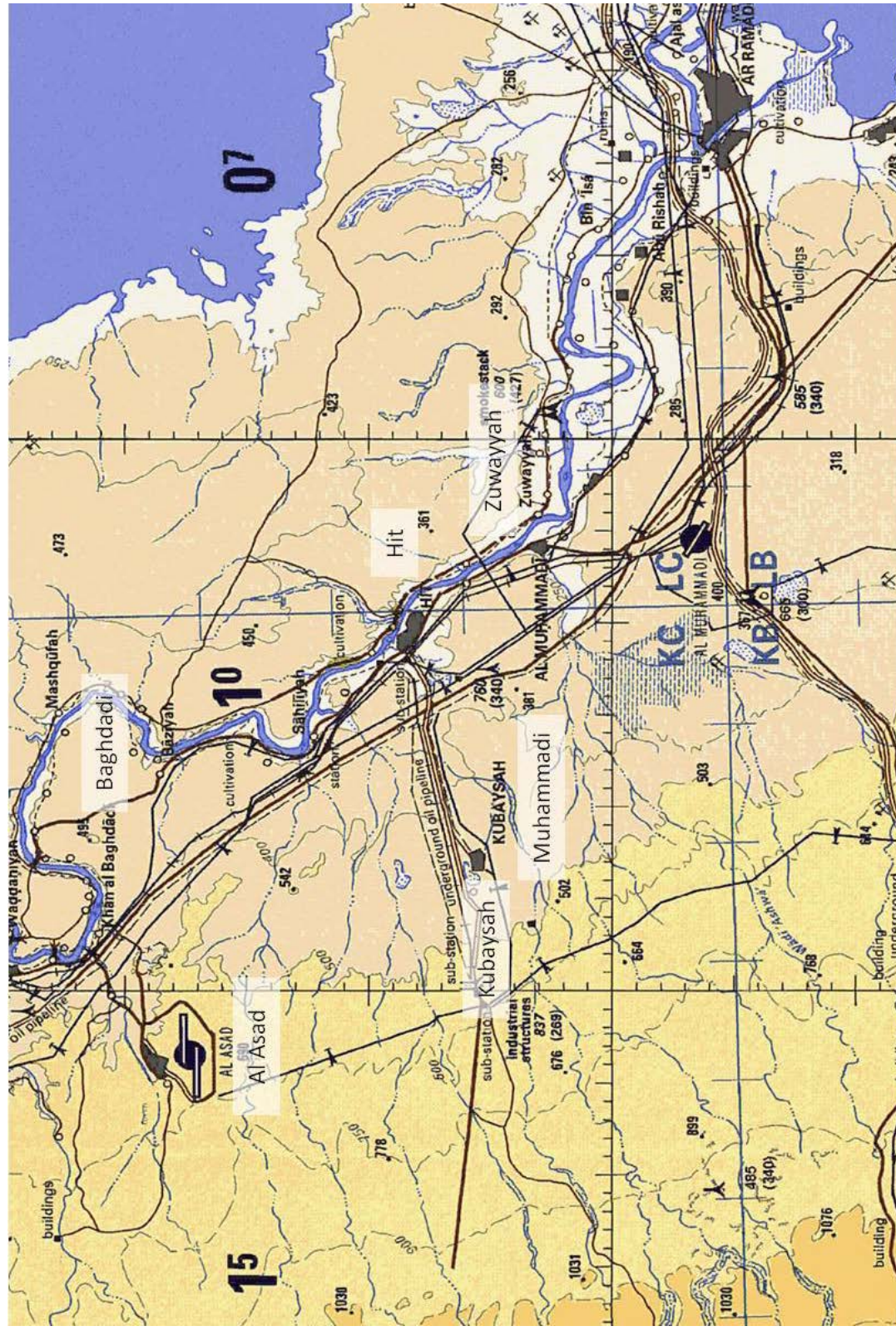


Figure D-5. Map of Hadithah Area



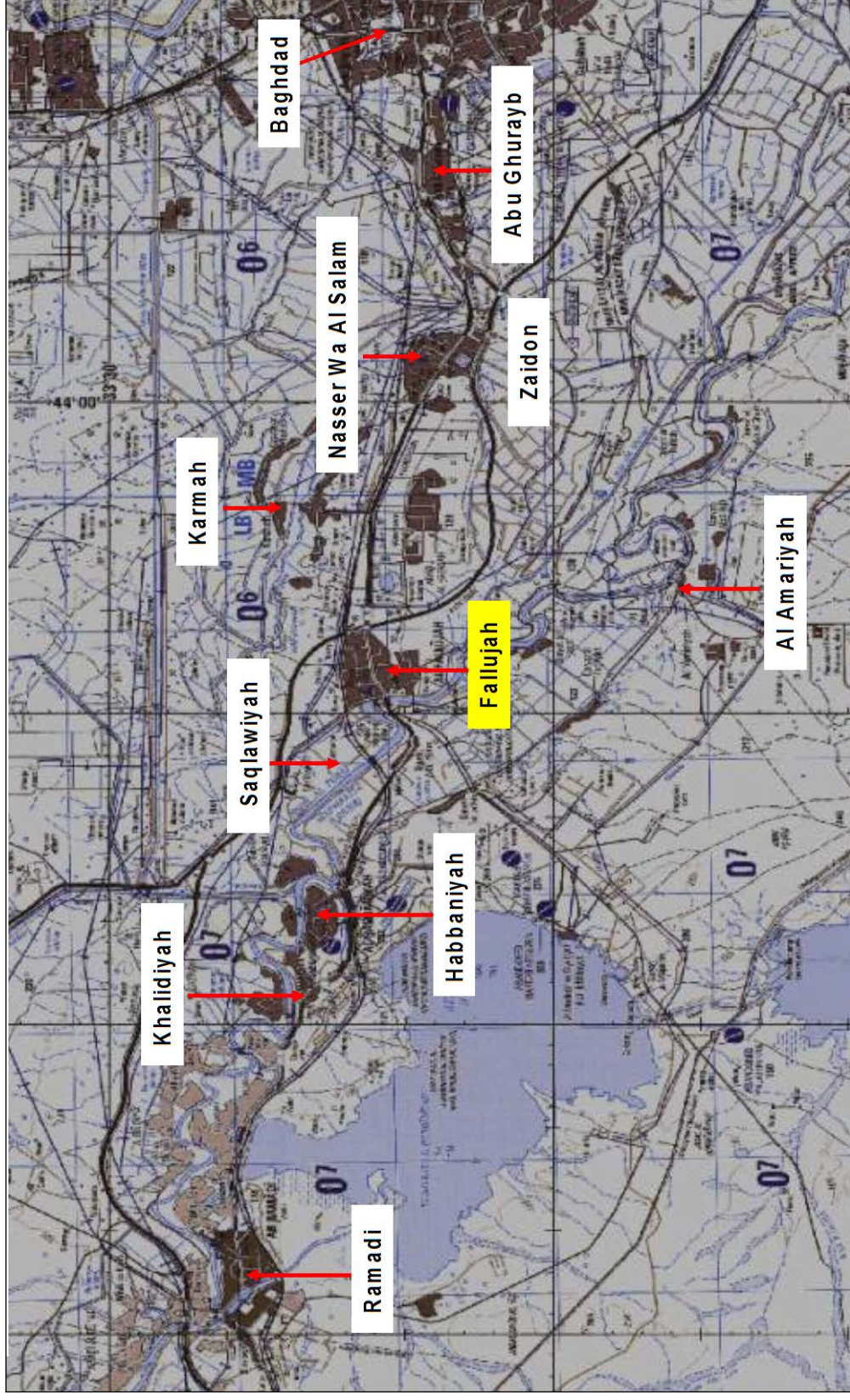


Image courtesy of 1st MARDIV

Figure D-8. Map of Fallujah and surrounding cities

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Appendix G. Abbreviations

ACR	Armored Calvary Regiment
ANGLICO	Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company
AO	Area of Operation
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
BATS	Biometric Automated Toolset System
BrigGen	Brigadier General–US Marine Corps
CA	Civil Affairs
CAP	Combined Action Platoon
Capt	Captain, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CERP	Commander Emergency Response Program
COIN	counterinsurgency
COL	Colonel, US Army
Col	Colonel, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
COP	Combat Outpost
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPT	Captain, US Army
FA	Field Artillery
FM	field manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
Gen	General, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
GOI	Government of Iraq
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IA	Iraqi Army
IAD	Iraqi Army Division

ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corps
IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
IED	improvised explosive device
IG	Iraqi Government
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IIG	Iraqi Interim Government
ING	Iraqi National Guard
IO	information operations
IP	Iraqi Police
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
JAWP	Joint Advance Warfighting Program
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
LAR	Light Armored Reconnaissance
LOC	lines of communication
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel, US Army
LtCol	Lieutenant Colonel, US Marine Corps
Maj	Major, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
MajGen	Major General, US Marine Corps
MARDIV	Marine Division
MARSOC	Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command
MCLC	Mine clearing line charges
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MG	Major General, US Army
MiTT	Military Transition Team
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps–Iraq
MND	Multi-National Division
MNF-W	Multi-National Forces-West

MSG	Master Sergeant
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OIF	Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
PME	Professional Military Education
POC	point of contact
POO	point of origin
PRQ	primary research questions
PsyOps	Psychological Operations
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
RIP	relief in place
ROE	rules of engagement
S-3	battalion or brigade operations staff officer (Army; Marine Corps battalion or regiment)
SFODA	Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha
SIGACT	Significant Activity Report
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SRQ	Secondary research questions
SVBIED	Suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
TF	Task Force
TOA	Transfer of Authority
VBIED	vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
WERV	Western Euphrates River Valley
XO	Executive Officer

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